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of Ontario



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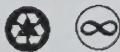
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 November 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 novembre 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAIR WORKPLACES, BETTER JOBS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL ET DE MEILLEURS EMPLOIS

Mr. Duguid, on behalf of Mr. Flynn, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I believe the minister will be here at some point this morning to speak, but we'll probably move over to the opposition beforehand.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister Duguid.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the minister is just arriving today. I think he would be much more equipped to speak to this bill than I would be. I see him; he's smiling. He's here and ready to go.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're sharing your time with the minister, that's—

Hon. Brad Duguid: I share my comments, Mr. Speaker—eloquent as I'm sure they were—with the Minister of Labour.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Eloquent comments. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: My speech says, "It's a pleasure to rise." I haven't sat yet, Speaker, but it is a pleasure to rise anyway.

We're here for third reading today of the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act. This legislation comes out of listening to Ontarians over the past few years. We listened to their concerns but we also listened to their hopes for a better life within today's workforce. We listened when we initiated the most comprehensive review of Ontario's labour laws, and we did that through the Changing Workplaces Review. Many of the proposals that are contained in the legislation respond to

what we heard during that process. Many of our proposals respond to what we see all around us: a world where the very nature of work is changing.

Everybody in the House, Speaker, and in homes across the province, knows that more of our fellow Ontarians are working in part-time jobs. They're in casual jobs, contract jobs, and they're working in minimum wage jobs and just trying to get by. This is despite the fact that Ontario has a very strong and a very growing economy. In fact, over the past three years, Ontario's economy has outperformed all G7 countries in terms of real GDP growth. That's something we should be proud of, Speaker. What we see is that our exports have increased and business investments in the province have increased. Ontario's unemployment rate has been below the national average, each and every month, for the past 24 months. But that's why we can't forget, Speaker, those who have every right and reasonable expectation to join us in this prosperity: those workers and their families.

We did very, very extensive consultation on this bill before we brought it forward. We really listened to Ontarians. We listened to employers, we listened to employees, we listened to people who were advocating for those who find themselves often living in poverty, we listened to small business and we listened to the chamber of commerce. We've listened, as well, after the introduction and during the committee hearings and the meetings that have taken place on this bill. Those conversations are reflected in the amendments we have added to our bill and, in my opinion, have made the bill even stronger and more reflective of the wishes of Ontarians.

The plan for fair workplaces and better jobs, Speaker, addresses a very wide range of issues. I just want to review some of the key elements of that plan for the House. First, raising the minimum wage: I think all members of the House would agree

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry. Continue, Minister.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. I think all Ontarians would agree that people who are working 35 or 40 hours a week—sometimes in two or three jobs just to get by—should be paid a wage that they can live on: they can buy the basics, they can pay rent, they can buy food, they can buy clothes for the kids.

In 2016, the median hourly wage in Ontario was \$13 an hour for part-time workers. Speaker, I'm here to tell you today that over the past 30 years, part-time work now has grown to represent nearly 20% of total employment in the province. Right now, 10% of workers in our

province earn the minimum wage of \$11.60. This is something that surprised me. I didn't know this. I think it surprises a lot of other people when I tell them that about a third, about 30% of workers in the province of Ontario, make less than \$15.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry, Minister.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. As I said, this surprises people. It surprised me and I thought I knew the province well, but about a third of workers in the province of Ontario make less than \$15 an hour.

When we think about the minimum wage in the past, it was often referred to as a student wage, a trainee wage or somebody that was new to the workforce. But what we're finding is that half of those people that are making less than \$15 an hour are between the ages of 25 and 64. I don't have to tell anybody in this House that those are the years you're trying to raise a family. That's the years that, if you're going to have kids, would be the years when you would be having those children and all the expenses that are associated with that. The majority of people who earn less than \$15 an hour are women. So that's 30% of Ontarians earning less than \$15 an hour, and that is millions of people in this province. Many of them support a family on a wage that just doesn't go far enough. They're raising children. They're trying to save for their education. They're wondering if they will be able to pay the bills each and every month, let alone ever being able to get ahead or perhaps even dream of owning a home.

So the movement that I'm asking the House to make today in the minimum wage is going to make a world of difference for millions of people in this province. The increases we've proposed in our legislation respond to the human need that we see around us on our streets each and every day. The plan is to raise the minimum wage to \$14 an hour on January 1, and \$15 an hour on January 1, 2019.

In another key element of our plan, what we'd like to do also is to make sure that those people that are working part-time are treated equitably, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect, and they're paid the same amount of money as somebody that is doing substantially the same job on a full-time basis. The reality is—and I don't have to tell anybody in this House; they see it in their own communities on a daily basis—more and more companies are choosing to hire part-time or temporary employees. What that's done in many cases—not all cases, but in many cases—is create a very unfair workplace in which some are paid less than others simply for doing the same job. I think most people in the province would agree that paying people the same rate of pay for substantially the same work is just plain common courtesy and fairness. That's why we've also proposed that casual, part-time and seasonal employees who do substantially the same work as full-timers—the work need not be identical—are paid the same rate of pay.

We're also proposing to increase minimum vacation entitlements. What we're saying is that after five years

with a company, an employee should be entitled to at least three weeks of paid vacation each year. Ontario is behind other provinces in guaranteeing better vacation rights to their employees. So it's time to do what's right.

0910

It's going to establish fairer rules for scheduling, rules that give greater certainty to workers while maintaining that flexibility we know is so important for employers. Workers deserve a degree of certainty, Speaker, especially when you need these shifts in order to make it through the month.

Our bill is going to ensure that more workers, not just those at large companies, have the right to take up to 10 days of personal emergency leave each year and, for the very first time in the province of Ontario, have two of those days paid. We all need to be able to respond to the realities of life—it could be an illness in the family; it could be the death of a loved one—but what we shouldn't be thinking about at that time is the prospect of perhaps losing our job just for taking that time off.

I think we're responding with the necessary compassion to those who experience or are threatened with domestic or sexual violence by providing up to 10 individual days of leave, up to 15 weeks of leave without fear of job loss, and the first five days of those leaves in each calendar year should be paid.

Our plan for fair workplaces and better jobs rewards good employers. The vast majority of employers in the province of Ontario are excellent organizations that provide the best for their employees. It helps ensure that responsible, law-abiding employers don't face unfair competition from businesses that skirt the law and take advantage of workers. Above all, it focuses squarely on making certain that workers are treated fairly.

Speaker, our economy is a good place to be right now. We're confident in Ontario's ability to do even better in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to say it's a pleasure to join the debate today, but I have mixed feelings, because this debate only allows us 10 minutes to speak to one of the most controversial but also one of the most wide-reaching and circumstance-changing pieces of legislation ever brought into this hallowed chamber—in the words of the minister himself, the most significant changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Labour Relations Act in almost a quarter of a century. Yet we're given 10 minutes to debate this in third reading.

The minister's own words—and this is what just galls us. First of all, the Liberals are masters of two things: They are masters of shutting down democracy, which is what they are doing in this House, and they are the masters of politics and political spin. The Premier said the other day in question period that they didn't go ahead with the changes to the minimum wage until June 1, in this piece of legislation, because the economy wasn't strong enough. Well, now we hear the minister this morning saying that for the past three years we've had a

great economy in Ontario, that for the past 24 months unemployment has been below the national average and that Ontario has been leading the G7 in economic growth for the past three years. He's been crowing like that for the past three years, yet in February of this year, he defended the current practice of tying the minimum wage to the rate of inflation; as did the Premier. I don't have an hour—I have got 10 minutes—but I could give you an hour of quotes from this minister and that Premier defending the current practice of tying the minimum wage to the rate of inflation.

So what changed? What changed? Well, you see, it's about the high-priced pollsters that the Liberals use. They went out and asked them, "What do we need? We have got the least popular Premier in the history, perhaps, of politics in general, let alone Ontario politics." But certainly in Ontario politics, no Premier has ever been lower in the polls. They said, "How can we pull a rabbit out of the hat? What can we do—something that is right off the wall, that we've never talked about before, that in fact we've spoken against in the Liberal Party. What can we do to salvage 2018?"

And those deep-thinking, highly paid pollsters came back to her and said, "You know what? There are no guarantees in life, but we have to do something really categorically different, something that nobody is going to expect. The NDP have been talking about this for a long time and we've always told them, 'Sit down. Be quiet. We're not going to do it.'" So they said, "What are we going to do? There is nothing we can do to make the Premier more popular. What can we do to get those people to somehow come around to us one more time?" They came back and they said, "You know, it's a long shot—it's a long shot—but we do believe that if we raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, that could be something positive for us. It's not a good thing for the province of Ontario. It's not a good thing for the economy. It's not a good thing for employers. It's not a good thing for small business. But we think it will be popular—we think it will be popular—and let's do it really quick so we get it over with."

They're hoping, Speaker, that the change that takes place on January 1 is immediately, essentially, a \$2.60 raise from what it was January 1, 2017—\$2.60, just like that. You see, before all of the negative effects can be fully absorbed, the people will be going to the polls, and they're hoping that none of the problems that are going to arise as a result of this will manifest themselves just yet. These are the Liberals now: "We will be able to fool the people. We'll be able to hornswoggle the voter one more time." One more time—that is what their hope is in Bill 148.

For two years, they've been doing what they call the Changing Workplaces Review—for two years—but not only was it not part of the Changing Workplaces Review; it was actually verboten—it was verboten.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Let's stop the clock. The members from the government side are

having an ongoing conversation with the speaker, who has been diligent to speak to me. I would prefer that you cut back on your comments. It's a little loud over there. Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker.

It was actually verboten in the Changing Workplaces Review. It was specifically cited as not going to be part of the review. But, of course, when they saw just how bad and how low Premier Wynne was in the polls, they had to do something drastic. So this is what they have come up with.

Everybody has recognized that there needs to be a \$15 minimum wage at some point in this province. The question is, at what rate should it rise, in order to derive the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people, with the least problems?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. The member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale is rather loud, so keep your comments to—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm talking to you. Keep your comments lower or go outside with it. Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They laugh at the Speaker.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, they just ignore what he said, but anyway.

Now, we've got a situation where—and this is not me speaking, but the Financial Accountability Officer, an officer of the Legislature, completely non-partisan, not involved in decision-making but whose role is to evaluate government policy to see what effect it will have on the economy and the finances of the province. The Financial Accountability Officer came out and said essentially what I'm saying today, that this was going to hurt the vulnerable. They claim they're trying to help and raise the standard of living for the lower class, poorer people who are not—those who are not experiencing the economic benefits. Well, the very people who they purport to be trying to help are the ones who are going to be hurt. They're going to be hurt by the changes in the legislation.

0920

The Financial Accountability Officer says the most—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the member from Barrie are having quite the conversation there. Next time I'm stepping it up.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker.

The very people who they purport to want to help in this are the ones who the Financial Accountability Officer says are going to be hurt. The jobs that are lost will be disproportionately among students, youth, women and

visible minorities. Well, aren't those essentially the very groups of people to whom we are trying to give some sense of equality in this province, some sense that they're not being left out, that they are not being shifted aside as the rest of us prosper—if this is what we're talking about in Ontario? But the result of this legislation is going to be precisely that: The people who are the most vulnerable are going to lose out.

I've had so many conversations not only with business people but with students themselves who have said, for example, "We've already been told that we don't have a job next summer where we had one this summer." It's not because they're not going to be in business; they're just not going to be hiring students. It's not because the student isn't still going to be in school and looking for a job; it's because the business won't be hiring students at the new rate of pay. They've said, "Look, I can get people with experience. We've always wanted to pay people a fair wage but there has always been an entry level wage where people learn on the job and they gain valuable life experience."

A job is one of the greatest places to garner life experience. You're not going to get it here in this place where it's so partisan most times that you don't even get objective debate, but you will get it in the workplace where you confront people of every different walk of life; different kinds of people walk through the door. For example, if you're in retail, you serve a very vast array of customers. That's a great way to understand and learn life experience. If you don't have that job you're not going to get that experience. That's not going to happen.

This is a bill that is being rushed through the Legislature purely for political purposes, but that's the way this government operates: not for the best interest of Ontario but for the Liberal Party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of New Democrats and Andrea Horvath here in the Legislature. We have 10 minutes to actually speak to a bill that has been travelling this province for the last two years. I don't know why we only have 10 minutes because we could probably speak on it for 12 hours.

We heard from the minister this morning that one third of workers in this province make less than minimum wage—part-time, casual, temporary, precarious workers just trying to get by—and that they should be able to join in the prosperity of this province. Well, I can tell you, Speaker, that this bill, other than increasing the minimum wage, which really just brings you back to living in the late 1970s in terms of costs and what your dollar will buy, doesn't do a heck of a lot for people who are in precarious jobs. There are millions of them in every sector. They are dying in factories across this province as temporary workers. Some of them pick up their paycheques at storefronts on Yonge Street. There's no health and safety legislation around them.

When the Toronto Star did their exposé this past year, they talked about the hundreds of incidents that places

like the Workers' Action Centre had brought to their attention. We have factories in this province where every employee is a temporary worker, and this legislation is going to do nothing but pay them the same rate of pay as the permanent worker beside them. It isn't going to give them any pension. It isn't going to give them any benefits. It isn't going to assist them in any way around their health and safety issues.

The minister said, "Well, we really listened to everyone," but, in fact, they didn't. The Liberal government voted down 36 amendments that the NDP brought forward to committee—amendments that would have gone a long way to fixing precarious work for workers in this province, things like card-check certification. The government introduced it for a couple of more sectors, so now there are four sectors of workers in the province that have card-check, but they're discriminating against all the other sectors so that it makes it more difficult for workers to join a union. We all know that joining a union decreases the precariousness of workers' lives.

They put in a minimum wage, but that minimum wage discriminates against students under 18, and it discriminates against liquor servers in this province who have to rely on tips to be able to support their families.

There are no real sick days—two days for every worker in the province for whatever leave you might have to take. We heard from all kinds of health professionals, community social service agencies who said two days is not enough. It takes five days to get over influenza.

We were looking for a definition of employer and independent contractor because there are thousands of workers in the province who are designated as independent contractors when they really aren't. They're dependent contractors.

No cap on temporary workers: The NDP had introduced an amendment that would see a cap of no more than 20% temporary workers in any workplace, and no longer than 90 days as a temporary employee so that people would have a ticket to permanent employment. But the Liberals voted that down.

There's nothing to address the issue of deeming for injured workers. They opened up the Employment Standards Act and they opened up the Labour Relations Act, but they didn't go far enough. They didn't open up the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act so that people collecting partial benefits today are not going to be negatively impacted and lose their compensation benefits as the wages increase and they're deemed to be working in a phantom job or a job that doesn't exist.

I want to take the opportunity to speak to the people who actually came out and worked on Bill 148: anti-poverty activists like ACORN, the community social service agencies, immigration labour councils, unions, the Wellesley Institute, the Workers' Action Centre, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, \$15 and Fairness, individuals. They lobbied, they rallied, they demonstrated, they presented, they petitioned, they lettered each and every one of us tirelessly over the last two years.

For 20 years—we had the Harris government, and for the last 14 years we've had the Liberal government. Under the Harris regime, the OLRB—the act was gutted. Ontario Works and ODSP payments were rolled back. The minimum wage was frozen. Then we moved to a Liberal government for 14 years. It has taken 14 long years to get to a point where we're going to address some issues for the most vulnerable, the lowest-paid workers in this province. But the government didn't go far enough, and they could have. We saw last week that with the swipe of a pen we could infringe on the rights of workers who were on strike and send them back to work in an hour. In an hour they wrote the legislation, they introduced it—but it has taken 14 years, and this government could have introduced a whole lot more. They could have brought forward a whole lot more issues to deal with the precarious work, but they haven't.

0930

They didn't deal with contract flipping and successor rights, so, in fact, companies just continue to flip and employees are negatively impacted every time that happens. Unions need to go out and reorganize those workers every time a contract flips.

Vacation: The NDP had actually introduced an amendment for three weeks' vacation after one year. That vacation provision has been in the Employment Standards Act as long as I've been working, and that's more than 40 years. We believe that workers should be entitled, after one year, to three weeks' vacation, but the government introduced a provision in Bill 148 that would see three weeks after five years. We know if there are millions of workers in precarious jobs, the vast majority of them are never going to actually see that vacation improvement.

The member from London West introduced a private member's bill on domestic violence and sexual violence that would have seen women, mostly, get 10 days' paid leave so that they could get their affairs in order: counseling for themselves, counselling for their children, see a lawyer, find a women's shelter or a place to live. But the Liberal government voted down that amendment that would have assisted women in this province.

There were so many more things that could have been put into this language: probation; replacement workers during a strike. We've seen long strikes over the last two years in the province of Ontario. We've seen people on the picket line—CarePartners, for example, for 10 months—and the government continues to allow replacement workers to be brought in, causing a lengthy strike, where in many cases in the past when we didn't have replacement workers, strikes would be over in just a day or two.

I think the government could have gone a lot farther. I don't know why they didn't, and I don't know why they are rushing through this bill here today in 30 minutes.

I think it's important to remember that there are close to three or four million people in this province who are working for minimum wage with no benefits and no pensions. If we really wanted to improve the lives of

these people, then we should have had a better look at all of the amendments that the NDP introduced over the second reading and the third reading, and we should have been listening more intently to those people who made presentations to us. There were over 1,500 presentations made to the committee, to the public hearings. I think the Liberal government should have listened more intently.

I know that, as New Democrats, we would have introduced far better legislation, seeing that we had these pieces of these acts opened—and not for the last 20 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 16, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Duguid has moved third reading of Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be voted on after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 21, 2017, on the motion for allocation of time on the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters / *Projet de loi 174, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le cannabis, la Loi de 2017 sur la Société ontarienne de vente du cannabis et la Loi de 2017 favorisant un Ontario sans fumée, abrogeant deux lois et modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne l'alcool, les drogues et d'autres questions.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe last time this was debated—the third party now has the floor. The member from Toronto—Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, thank you very much. I appreciate the introduction, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion this morning.

I find it extraordinary that we're dealing with a time allocation motion on this bill. Speaker, I know you won't be surprised. Frankly, there's a lot in this bill that still needs to be debated, and my hope is that in a thoroughgoing debate, there will be an opportunity for all in this Legislature to think about the amendments that

have to be made to the bill to deal with its underlying faults and problems. So I don't understand why on earth the government is moving a time allocation motion on this. As I understand it, the debate has been productive. It hasn't been something that people have been drawing out; people are getting at the heart of a very substantial matter.

Just to go into some of the things that I believe still remain to be addressed, should be addressed in debate and, frankly, will not be properly addressed if there is time allocation: Off the top, this bill just seems to have an awful lot of holes in it, an awful lot of areas that have not been properly addressed. There are real questions about what the rules will be governing where stores will be set up. That's not addressed in this bill. How many stores will big cities like Toronto, Mississauga, Hamilton and Ottawa get? That's not addressed in this bill, and no understanding of how that formula will be determined. We don't know how big these stores will be, how cannabis will be priced or how cannabis will be taxed. These are very substantial questions.

In my community, I would say that people overwhelmingly support the legalization, but the question of where the retail outlets will be is a very big issue. The lack of detail, the lack of discussion, is a real question here.

We in the NDP support the legalization of recreational cannabis and we support the LCBO role: the former, the legalization, because too many people had their lives damaged through charges on an issue that really belongs more to the realm of social policy than to the realm of criminal law. As to the support for the LCBO model of retailing, we know that the LCBO is a well-regarded and responsible retailer. We know that having a set-up that allows retailing without the profit motive driving policy is really important. Cannabis is a substantial substance; it can have serious effects. With all of that, it is a popular substance, and if you're going to retail it, then you need it to be retailed by an organization, a corporation, that understands all of the social factors that are involved.

We've seen a list of communities that are going to be the hosts to Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. stores. There are about 40 stores that are planned for a province of 14 million people. It doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. If we're going to deal with the whole question of the black market, of criminal involvement in the sale of cannabis, then you have to ask who is actually thinking this strategy through, because this doesn't look like a comprehensive strategy to move Ontario away from this black market.

On top of all that, although this government has been talking about where it's going to put retail outlets, as far as we can tell, there's been no consultation with the affected municipalities and, frankly, there should have been. As I'll hopefully be able to get to further on in this speech, the local municipalities will be involved in carrying the cost of enforcement. If they're going to be carrying substantial costs, they need to be part of the discussion as to exactly what is going to be in their communities.

This bill has many, many loose ends and it seems clear that it's going to be up to a new government to sort those out. I think it would be to the government's advantage—to Ontario's advantage, more importantly—to not stop debate on this bill, to not time-allocate it, but to actually let the debate run its course and let there be a proper consultation and a proper debate on exactly what should be in the bill.

0940

We've seen this with other bills. Right now, I'm the Chair of the social policy committee. We're dealing with time allocation on Bill 166. Frankly, the public has wanted to get in to speak on this, but the notice period has been extraordinarily short. There's a lot of frustration.

I want to touch on a few things that are missing in this bill. I'm happy to say our critic, the member for Essex, has done a very thorough job in his leadoff speech going through all of this. But I want to reiterate some of the things that should be addressed and that probably won't in the course of this curtailed schedule of debate on the bill.

First of all, this framework is still a work in progress. Now, some of this is understandable. We're still waiting to see exactly what the federal government will put forward. We have Bill C-45. It's not yet law; it's still being amended. Some of the things that are unaddressed: for example, the original version of C-45 did not legalize edible cannabis products, and so Bill 174 doesn't seem to accommodate them either. But now the federal government says that they will amend C-45 to allow for edibles within a year of C-45 coming into force.

This is a problematic area. There are a lot of people who are going to have difficulty with second-hand smoke from cannabis users. This will become an issue in multi-unit buildings. In a previous life, I was a property manager in a housing co-op, and the conflict between people in smoking and non-smoking units that were adjacent to each other was profound. It's bad enough that people are dealing with cigarette smoke. If they are also having to deal with the psychoactive impact of cannabis coming through their walls, there's going to be an awful lot more conflict. I don't know why the federal government didn't address edibles early on, because that's going to be one of the ways that you deal with the second-hand smoke problem. Clearly, we aren't dealing with it in this bill.

The bill, strangely, keeps one foot firmly in the prohibition era in its approach to what will soon be a legal product. There's going to be confusion amongst consumers between this legalization of cannabis, on the one hand, and on the other, unprecedented new powers for police that are more severe than what exists for alcohol or cigarettes. Speaker, we're facing a situation where people understand these products to be legalized, but at the same time facing what could be heavy-handed enforcement and some unintended consequences.

The enforcement and the penalties in this bill are focused on unauthorized dispensaries. The maximum penalties facing dispensaries are vastly higher than those

for illegal alcohol sales under the Liquor Licence Act. The landlord liability provisions seem unprecedented. I think we do need regulations; I don't think there's any question. But this actually raises the issue: Why is this so much more severe than for liquor and tobacco? I think that's an item that needs to be debated at greater length, and this time allocation motion will choke off that debate.

The maximum penalties for selling non-medical cannabis to minors are actually lower than the maximum penalties for selling alcohol or cigarettes to minors. That seems to be inconsistent with a much tougher approach to retailers and dispensaries. In fact, Bill 174 seems much more focused on enforcing the government's retail monopoly than it is with protecting minors. That's a substantial issue. That's an issue that deserves greater debate in this chamber, not a stifling of debate, which is what the government has proposed and what we're debating this morning.

There are broadly written provisions that could potentially capture innocuous activities and subject them to steep fines. For example, if an adult is found driving with a half-used package of cannabis for later use in their pocket, even if it's medical cannabis, they could face a fine of up to \$100,000 as an illegal transporter, and everyone in the car can be searched by the police without a warrant. I can see obvious problems with this.

Again, it makes sense to allow debate to continue on this; hopefully, in the course of that debate, solutions being put forward and problems with the bill being addressed. Thinking that time allocation stifling debate is actually going to improve the quality of decision-making here is not a defensible position, has been shown historically to be wrong, but that's where the Liberal government is going.

The use of non-medical cannabis is pretty much limited to private residences, which exposes cannabis users who lack access to private residences to disproportionate policing and prosecution. Interestingly, I was approached by a person in my riding who works in a medical cannabis dispensary. This was one of the areas that they were most concerned about, because there are many people who don't have access to a private space where they could consume cannabis.

If we set the law up so there's no way to function within it without breaking it, we're going to have people who are charged, people who are entrapped, to no useful social purpose—no useful social purpose. Now, the government says it will explore the feasibility and implications of introducing designated establishments where recreational cannabis could be consumed, but there's no provision for that in this bill.

Speaker, the bill is half-baked. Ending the debate now means the oven is turned off. It's a mistake.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—no, he has decided not to. Oh, you're a little early.

Further debate? Second call. The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. I wish I could say I was pleased to stand and rise on Bill 174, the Cannabis Act—

Mr. Michael Harris: But he's not.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: But he's right, I'm not. Time allocation is a serious issue here right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're not dealing with the bill. Stick to the bill, please.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I am; sorry. Again, time allocation, in my opinion and in the opinion of many in this Legislature, is not democratic at all, especially when they talk about the Cannabis Act.

Now, there's a portion of this bill that I was rather surprised to see. That was a bill related to a previous bill that had been introduced and this government has sat on for close to nine months. That was Bill 94, the school bus safety act. I was very, very concerned about that, because now it's going to be pointed out—because as I read it in the act as it is right now, it's going to be decided with regulations. But the point is, what are those regulations going to say? When are they going to introduce it? How are they going to get that information out? How are drivers in Ontario going to know? So I have some real, serious concerns about that.

The Attorney General introduced Bill 174 to legalize cannabis. In my opinion, we shouldn't even be talking about that, because this is something that obviously the federal Liberal government is imposing. It's going to be tragic for the entire country of Canada, of which Ontario is very much a part of.

Again, some very serious concerns about that, and it's just not right for this government to continue to play games with the democratic process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll try this again. Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to have a chance to speak to the time allocation of this bill. I want to take a moment to talk a bit about what we've heard on time allocation from members of the opposition. But before I do, I think it's important that we point out that there is a mandated timeline that is attached to this bill, and that timeline is not of our choosing. The federal government, as you know, has taken steps to legalize cannabis by July 2018. As we know, that date is just around the corner. That said, Speaker, even though the federal legislation was only introduced a few months ago, our government, knowing it was coming, has been working on these priorities for over a year.

The legislation that we are proposing and the approach it supports were developed through months of research and policy development across a dozen ministries, led by a dedicated legalization of cannabis secretariat. For many months, our government has been working closely with our partners at the federal and provincial level to manage this complex transition. We have been engaged with states such as Colorado in the US and other jurisdictions that have already legalized recreational cannabis at the state level, so we could benefit from the lessons that they have learned and the best practices when they went through this legislation.

Over the summer, we held consultations with stakeholders from across industries and launched an online survey for people across the province.

There is a lot of uncertainty about what's moving forward with the federal government. For instance, I agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth on the whole issue around edibles, but, let's be clear: The federal government isn't going to address that issue until after the July 1 implementation. Therefore, it ill behooves us to delay our legislation until they get that right; it's happening down the road.

We've also heard a lot from members about a lack of debate on the sections. But the sections, like in schedule 3 that cover the vaping issue; these were all debated almost two years ago and we're simply taking that debate and putting it in the context of a uniform approach under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

We also had prior extensive debate on the transportation sections in a previous bill—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: As the member opposite noted, it was eight months ago.

We're putting those in and we will be dealing with the specific details in regulations. That's the right way and the right approach to do it.

We've heard so many complaints from the opposition. In response I just ask them to take a look at the calendar. We have been saying since the beginning that to meet the deadline which is imposed by the federal government this legislation must pass before the House rises this session. There are less than four weeks left for us to do this, and we have other legislation which is also extraordinarily important to the people of Ontario.

This legislation does include critical safety measures to protect Ontario communities by strengthening enforcement measures, giving stronger tools for police to shut down dispensaries, tougher penalties to tackle impaired driving to keep our roads safe, and strict rules on where cannabis can be used to keep our communities and our youth healthy.

Moreover, we are committed to opening 40 dedicated cannabis retailers by July 2018, but until this legislation is passed we cannot start the necessary preparations to open these stores. Also bear in mind that once these stores open there will still be opportunities for people to legally purchase through the mail system online and have it mailed as it currently is, particularly with medical marijuana, and no doubt with recreational marijuana as well.

Delaying this legislation, as the opposition seems to desire, will put the people of Ontario at risk. It will make the timelines to actually do the regulations, the consultations and the postings and get these stores open—it puts that process at risk. It's essential that we do everything that we can to meet the timelines that were imposed on us by the federal government so we can protect the health and safety of all the people of Ontario. Our government has worked diligently over this past year to propose and introduce a plan that will keep Ontarians safe and meet the federal timelines.

I implore the Legislature and the opposition to do the right thing: Support the passage of this legislation so that the necessary protections for the people of Ontario can be put in place as quickly as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Mauro has moved government notice of motion 42 relating to allocation of time of Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be voted on after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Seeing no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 0954 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to introduce two chiropractors that I met with this morning, Dr. Ken Brough from Ottawa and Dr. Murray Townsend from my riding of Perth–Wellington, and also two members of the Stratford Professional Firefighters' Association, Andrew Rogerson, who is the president, and Kevin Aitcheson, who is the treasurer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome many people from northern Ontario: mayors, chiefs, labour leaders, Jamie Lim from the OFIA and others who are here to talk about the sustainability of the forest sector in this province and how important it is that we maintain this very green industry. I would like to single out Jamie Lim, who is from the city of Timmins. I will talk about those people from my riding and also Al Spacek, mayor of Kapuskasing, along with our good friend Roger Sigouin from Hearst, Ontario.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I would like to introduce the following members of the Ontario Chiropractic Association who are here at Queen's Park for their annual lobby day. In the east lobby are Dr. Ayla Azad, Dr. Ken Brough, Dr. Carol Cancelliere and Dr. Bob Haig, CEO. I would also like to invite all of my colleagues to room 228 after question period.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I would like to introduce two professional firefighters from St. Thomas, the best firefighters, of course, in Ontario: Warren Scott and Daryl Smith.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just for everybody—we have a very large number of people that want to do intros. Let's keep them short, please, and do the intros.

Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute delight to introduce our city councillor from ward 13. If you love High Park, you should love her: Sarah Doucette keeps High Park looking beautiful. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Colle: I would like to introduce very important labour leaders on this historic day for workers in Ontario: Pat Dillon, president of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario; Buzz Hargrove, Centre for Labour Management Relations at Ryerson University; Nikki Holland, Carpenters' District Council of Ontario; and Sean McFarling from LiUNA. Welcome.

Mr. Norm Miller: I want to introduce part of the group from northern Ontario here today, starting off with Jamie Lim from the Ontario Forest Industries Association, also Ian Dunn and Lauren McBride from OFIA, Bill Murnighan from UNIFOR, Matt Wilkie from Weyerhaeuser, Jason Lacko from United Steelworkers, Georjann Morrisseau, who is the former chief, Fort William First Nation, and also representing Resolute Forest Products, Tom Ratz from Resolute Forest Products, and Mayor Roger Sigouin from Hearst. Welcome.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I would like to welcome a friend of mine, Jason McMichael, who is the director of government relations for the Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 1089 in Sarnia. Welcome, Jason.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to welcome Rob Hyndman, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters' Association, Mark Train, the executive vice-president, John Sobey, the government relations chair, and all firefighters' associations who are in the House this morning. I know my colleague from Ottawa South has mentioned it, but I encourage all members to come to our reception tonight, to stop by to pay respects and say thank you to the firefighters.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to introduce Robert Brandon, Dirk Franke, Mike Tucker and Bill Banting from the Whitby fire department. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to welcome Brett Gibson and Chris Hicknell from the Waterloo regional professional firefighters' association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome my former principal, Chris Vanderberg, and his daughter Alaina. From my riding of Barrie, we have firefighters Steve Pomeroy and Eric Webster, who are here for the Barrie Professional Firefighters Association, and they are the best firefighters in Ontario. Also Dr. Scott Best, with the Ontario Chiropractic Association.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to issue a warm welcome to Chief Ed Wawia of Red Rock Indian Band, Chief Joe Ladouceur from Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, Jordan Hatton from Bingwi Neyaashi Anishi-

naabek, Chief Janice Henderson from Mitaanjigamiing First Nation, Brian Perrault from Couchiching, and Wilfred King from Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, all the way from the city of Timmins, two professional firefighters: John Mavrinac and Peter Osterberg. Welcome.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have some very special guests today in the House: first, to introduce, in the west gallery, my very good friend and strong community leader in Durham, Ibrahim Dinayal, and also his guests, Saeed Asiri, Dr. Khalid Mahmood and, Speaker, from Saudi Arabia, visiting us today, Hassan Muways. I want to thank you for being here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome Dr. Bruce Flynn, who is from the Belleville Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic. He's with the Ontario Chiropractic Association.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: We have wonderful firefighters from Burlington with us today, and I'd like to introduce them: Dan VanderLelie, their president, Paul Cunningham, Ralph Baigent, Josh Cline and Nick Mitrovich. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Speaker, we also have with us today David Sparrow, the president of ACTRA National, joining us in the member's gallery for the passing of Bill 148. Welcome, David. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We have with us today Kristen Oliver from NOMA; former mayor and former MP Ken Boshcoff, with the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce; Mayor Al Spacek, from Kapuskasing, who is the president of FONOM; and Mayor Ron Holman, from Rideau Lakes township, chair of ROMA.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'd like to welcome representatives from the Peterborough Professional Fire Fighters association and members of the Better Way Alliance who are joining us for question period this morning: Amanda Terfloth, Anita Agrawal and Damin Starr. We welcome them here today.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our page captain today is Natalie Conrad from Oak Ridges–Markham. She is joined, in the members' gallery, by her parents, Donna and Charles Conrad, and her sister Leah.

I would also like to introduce a number of stakeholders who are here to watch the anticipated passage of Bill 148: Stephanie Procyk, United Way; Amy Swanson and April Bateman, from the YMCA; Marlene Ham, from OAITH; and Alexandra Simpson, Jasmine Rezaee and Jeanette Manguiat, representatives of the YWCA.

Mr. Ross Romano: I would also like to welcome a group that has joined us here from northern Ontario: a past president of NOMA and current mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield; current president of NOMA and mayor of Shuniah, Wendy Landry; the current mayor of Greenstone, Renald Beaulieu; the mayor of Atikokan, Dennis Brown; and mayor of Ignace, Lee Kennard.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to introduce Mark Muldoon and Kris Vopel from the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, and of course their president, Rob Hyndman. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce to the House today Sharleen Stewart, Manny Carvalho and many fellow SEIU members. Dave Millar is here, the president of the Oakville and District Labour Council. Colette Murphy has joined us, the executive director of the Atkinson Foundation. Naureen Rizvi is here from Unifor. And Rob Halpin is here today, who is the assistant to the newly re-elected Chris Buckley, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I had two great meetings this morning with people from my riding. First, from the Ontario Chiropractic Association, Marc Bisson and Marg Harrington; and from the Cornwall Professional Fire Fighters Association, Jeff McIntyre and Dan Patton. Welcome.

Hon. Chris Ballard: On this important day, I'm delighted to introduce Sheila Block and Trish Hennessey, from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Deena Ladd, from the Workers' Action Centre; and members of the \$15 and Fairness campaign.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have one more introduction: grade 10 students from the science, technology, engineering, art and math program, three different high schools who have come together to present their class. I welcome you for being here today and I hope you enjoy your day at Queen's Park.

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Ms. Cindy Forster: I would like to welcome the Welland professional firefighters: Mike Fowler and other members are here today with us in the gallery.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Jeff Voisin and Greg Horton, firefighters from my beautiful riding of Richmond Hill.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Welcome to Ryan Madill from the St. Catharines Professional Firefighters.

Hon. Bill Mauro: A long list of introductions: First, I had a meeting this morning with the Ontario Professional Firefighter's Association, and I would like to welcome Mark Train; and from Thunder Bay, Eric Nordlund and Dennis Brescacin.

As well, there are a number of other guests that I see in the gallery all over the place—I'm running out of space on the paper here: Wendy Landry, the mayor of Shuniah and president of NOMA; Dennis Brown, my mayor from Atikokan—great to see you, Dennis; Lee Kennard from Ignace; David Canfield, the mayor of Kenora and past president of NOMA; Renald Beaulieu from Greenstone; Ken Boshcoff, former mayor of Thunder Bay; I see Jamie Lim in the background there, from OFIA; and Al Spacek from Kapuskasing. I think I probably missed two or three, but welcome all. Good to see you.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to introduce Ana Liversidge visiting with her class from St. Agnes school. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: To all the folks from north-western Ontario, welcome; it's great to see you again; and, of course, a fine Sudburian, Rob Hyndman, the president of the professional firefighters.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today Jason Davison. He is the vice-president of the Sarnia Professional Firefighters Association. I met with him earlier this morning.

Mr. Han Dong: We have some young guests here: It's my pleasure to welcome members of the University-Rosedale Youth Council here in the public gallery this morning. Both myself and MP Chrystia Freeland work closely with the group, and they do a fantastic job.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Professional firefighter Dan Bonnar, representing Ajax fire services, will be here today.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Ann Bryan of the firefighters of Ontario, from Kingston.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm delighted to welcome, from my riding of Kitchener Centre, Stephanie and Reuben Janzen-Martin, who bid on lunch with their MPP at the Rockway Mennonite Collegiate auction. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, I'd like to welcome Scott Allinson, VP of public affairs of HRPAA; Dr. Beder of the Decent Work and Health Network, and her colleagues; and Mary Gellatly from Parkdale Community Legal Services, who are here for the third reading vote on Bill 148. Welcome to all of you.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to welcome one of my residents from Hamilton Mountain who I see in the House today, Lisa Pattison. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome the students from Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School located in my riding of Durham, as well as their teachers. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I see, hiding somewhere behind there, Dr. Bruce Flynn. He's here with the chiropractors' association. Welcome, Bruce.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome professional firefighters from the Halton region here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Dr. Ken Brough, who is a friend and a very good chiropractor in the beautiful riding of Ottawa Centre.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to say thank you to Aditya Deshpande, our page captain today, from London North Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As I used to do when I wasn't sitting here, I used to stand up and say this: For anyone who was not introduced, welcome.

I will introduce someone in the Speaker's gallery: Mr. Gavin Jacklyn, a friend of mine, and also from the Brantford Professional Fire Fighters Association. Thank you for being with us, Gavin.

Also, shortly to arrive is a former member, the MPP for Fort York in the 35th and 36th Parliaments, and the MPP for Trinity-Spadina in the 37th, 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments, along with his partner, Evelyn Murialdo, and individuals from Scadding Court Community Centre. Rosario Marchese will be joining us shortly.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I appreciate your patience in introductions. It's important that we recognize those who have come to visit with us.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. I'm going to put forward a pretty simple question. It doesn't require spin. It doesn't require fluff. It doesn't require historical context. There will be no need to blame people from 20 years ago or say your dog ate your homework.

What I want to know is—directly to the Minister of Energy—exactly what was the net financial loss incurred by the Liberal government when exporting power over the last two years?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The exact number is \$236 million in benefits, as estimated by the experts at the Independent Electricity System Operator. These benefits translate into reduced costs for the ratepayers, something that we as a government see as so important. That's why we brought forward the fair hydro plan and reduced rates by 25%, something that they voted against.

What about since 2013? The net benefit of our exports has been over \$1 billion in savings to Ontario ratepayers.

If we want to go, in fact, to when they had their history and their talks about what they did in the sector, they were actually spending \$7 million in electricity in one day just to keep the air conditioners going. They were complaining about having to import.

We now export and make money, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Each side has had their chance to heckle. It's now stopping.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The message has been sent, clearly.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Energy: The Minister of Energy just said they make money on exports. Unfortunately, facts still matter in Ontario. The Minister of Energy's response is absurd and factually incorrect. The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers laid it all out and it was reported in the Financial Post: "Cheap exports of surplus nuclear, solar, wind and hydro power could have cost Ontario as much as \$1.25 billion over 21 months...." The facts are in the Financial Post: \$1.25 billion squandered by this Liberal government, lost to Michigan, New York and all across the northern United States. We don't need fake spin. Facts do matter.

Will the Minister of Energy stand in the House and say that the Financial Post is wrong, the engineers are wrong? No one believes this government's fake spin. Come clean. Tell us the truth.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

In fact, while the question was being put, I heard more noise from this side than I heard from the other side. So we are in warnings, and I'll be quick to come up.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: He is right; facts do matter in Ontario. That's why we bring forward facts each and every day, while they're the party that talks about spin when they have no policy and no idea what to do in this sector.

The experts in this sector are at the Independent Electricity System Operator, the people who run our system day in and day out. I take their advice, and I listen to what they have to say very carefully. What the IESO says—and maybe they should listen—is that we have made \$236 million—

Mr. Steve Clark: The IESO verified the engineers' numbers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We made \$236 million last year, we made \$238 million the year before, and we made more than that the year before that.

You want to go back all the way into history? Let's go back to 2002 and 2003, when Ontario paid \$900 million to import electricity because they let the system go. They let it—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

1050

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: It's almost comedy hour here. The Minister of Energy is saying they rebuilt energy? This government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy is warned.

Finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Minister of Energy being proud of his record on hydro—they've tripled rates since 2003, and they're proud of it? They've allowed a situation to occur where we're subsidizing businesses in Michigan, Pennsylvania—the northern United States. You're charging Ontario families to subsidize our competitors.

Facts matter, so I will repeat my question to the Minister of Energy: Are you saying that the Financial Post and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers are wrong when they say you blew over \$1 billion—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is warned.

I'm almost tempted to do something I never thought I would think I'd have to do and offer a blanket warning to everybody. That's unheard of, but I will if I have to.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I can understand why the government is getting testy about their own record of

blowing \$1 billion, but I just want the Minister of Energy to come clean, to tell the House the truth. Are the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers and the Financial Post correct when they say this government blew \$1 billion?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: When we look at the experts, the Independent Electricity System Operator, which runs our system, which knows the day-in-and-day-out needs of our entire system, our entire province, they have said since 2013 that we have seen \$1 billion in savings.

Of course I'm very proud of the record of this government and what we've done with the electricity sector. We've rebuilt the system that they left in tatters—\$70 billion to actually fix the system.

Let's start looking at it: Eliminating coal, making sure that individuals like Matthew, a 10-year-old boy who hasn't had to go to the hospital for a year and a half because the air is clean. That's something that I know everyone on this side of the House—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Oxford is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I will continue to work for people like Matthew and for other children in this province who need clean air to breathe, unlike that party, who vote against everything that we do to make this province better for people like Matthew, for seniors, for adults, for children. We make sure that we look after the people of our province, unlike that party.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Firefighters have indicated they want to see proactive health and safety for the various aspects of their trade. Their section 21 committee provides guidance, but non-mandatory health and safety regulations for firefighters.

How will the minister address reviewing the section 21 committee mandate and a commitment to the safety of our firefighters? Will she make the guidance notes and other recommendations mandatory under the Occupational Health and Safety Act?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: First, I'm glad that the Leader of the Opposition is asking this question, because it gives me an opportunity to thank all of our firefighters across our province, who are working so hard to keep our communities safe.

I had the honour of going to speak with them when they were here yesterday for their meeting. One thing that we have committed to is a partnership with our firefighters, the collaborative effort to raise the issues that they have brought forward for the last 10 years with us.

I'm very proud of our fire safety record. We've seen a decrease all around our province regarding fire in buildings, in housing, based on some initiatives.

Again, I want to work, and we are continuing to work, with our firefighters.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the minister: A simple yes or no—our firefighters deserve that. Will the guidance notes and other recommendations be made mandatory under the Occupational Health and Safety Act? Yes or no: Can our firefighters count on you?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would say definitely they can count on us working in collaboration and partnership, as we've done for numerous years.

When I was appointed the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, part of my mandate was to create a Fire Safety Technical Table, where lots of issues have been raised collectively to find solutions to improve the well-being of our firefighters.

Again, I want to commend our member the Minister of Labour for introducing PTSD. That was a huge component of our collaboration and our partnership with our firefighters.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the minister: Since I can't get an answer on the section 21 safety aspect for firefighters, let me ask a different question for firefighters. Two years ago, I rose in this House and spoke of the late Billy Wilkins. Over a decade ago, he lost his life running into a fire to keep my community, the city of Barrie, safe.

A year ago, I asked that same question about the need to have survivor benefits in the province of Ontario for our first responders who sacrifice their own safety to keep our province safe. For the third time, I will raise this again in the House and ask the minister if I can have this province's commitment that we will set up an Ontario survivors benefit for the families of first responders, recognizing that they put their own family at risk, they put their own safety at risk.

I saw what happened to firefighter Wilkins. His family was left with nothing after he gave his life for our community. Can I count on the minister to make sure we have a program like that in Ontario?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: First off, I want to say that my heart goes out to all the families that have lost loved ones in the line of duty. They paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep our communities safe, and we are eternally grateful.

I was also very pleased, actually, to hear that our Liberal federal partners are establishing a public safety officer award which includes \$80 million to support the families of those who have fallen in the line of duty. Every member in this House and all levels of government can agree that these families deserve support.

Mr. Speaker, our government currently supports these families through funds such as the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund. It is named after Constable Joseph MacDonald of the Sudbury police, who was shot in the line of duty in 1993. Our government commends the

dedication that our public safety officers exhibit every day.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today is the second day college students have been back in the classroom since the strike, and they've been offered nothing but more chaos and confusion as to whether they can withdraw from their semester, get their tuition refunded and not lose their spot in the program of their choice. One student says, "To everyone thinking that dropping the semester means you can still take second semester, that's not the case. If you want a refund, you withdraw from your entire program."

Why is the Premier forcing students who can't complete the condensed semester to leave college entirely and then reapply, with no guarantee that they will get back into their program?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I have to say that the line of questioning that the member opposite is pursuing is disturbing given that that was the party that has said that if they were in power, those students would still be suffering from the strike. They were very clear. At every turn, as we tried to get students back to work, they blocked our legislation. We used every opportunity.

Last Thursday, we sought unanimous consent to introduce legislation. This was denied by the NDP. On Friday, we introduced legislation and then requested unanimous consent to debate the legislation the same day—denied. On Saturday, we asked the House to immediately vote on second and third reading. The NDP said no. On Sunday, we asked for an immediate third reading vote, but again the NDP said no.

Speaker, students are back in the classroom. We're—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would appreciate an answer to my question. After five weeks of uncertainty, students need clear information from this Premier and this minister. They have only days to decide about the condensed program, and they need to be able to assess their options.

1100

Another student says, "I only get a full refund if I withdraw the semester, which I can't even do with the program I'm in or I lose my full year. Thanks for nothing, Ontario government!"

Speaker, why is this Premier forcing students to drop out completely if they want their tuition refunded?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I can tell you that we are doing everything possible, and the colleges are doing everything possible, to support students to complete their semester. That is what we are strongly encouraging students to do. That is why we have given a two-week—the member opposite says "days"—two weeks to decide what is best for them. Every student has the right to choose whether they want to withdraw with the full tuition refund, or if they want to continue and work towards a successful completion of their year.

It's two weeks. We're urging students to actually take advantage of that two weeks, to understand how they're going to be able to get back on track after this strike, which would have gone on indefinitely, had the NDP had their way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The minister knows students are being forced to give up their spot in their program in order to qualify for the tuition refund, with no guarantee that they will be accepted back in the future. That's not acceptable.

These students want to continue the education they started, but they have lives outside of the classroom. Many have kids, jobs and other obligations that will make it difficult to successfully complete an accelerated, condensed course. They do not want to drop out. They want to defer until January, to get a fresh start on a complete semester. Why is the Premier forcing these students to drop out?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am encouraging every student who is considering conditions to actually speak with their college, because there is nothing in our directive that prevents students from beginning in January, but not every college program is semestered. Many have a full year and so students have to work with their college to find the best option for them. If they choose to withdraw, they will get a full refund of their tuition, but I'm encouraging students to work, to do the very best they can to complete the semester.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Acting Premier: Speaker, this minister knows it was inaction by her Liberal government that prolonged the strike for five weeks. The Premier's refusal to step in and facilitate a deal meant that some students had to give up their apartments. They've been forced to juggle work schedules. They've had to rearrange travel plans, maybe plans to go home for the holidays. A hardship fund capped at \$500 just doesn't cut it.

One student said, "That doesn't even cover my rent for the month I missed, not to mention my groceries, my parking pass that I already paid for ... gas money to get to campus because I work there, phone/Internet bill, etc." Why can't the Premier come up with a fund that will actually meet the financial hardships experienced by students?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We've taken unprecedented action to ensure that students have access to a hardship fund. It is well within the discretion of the college to determine, in exceptional cases, that the limit of \$500 be waived.

The member opposite keeps referring to an opportunity we had to interfere in collective bargaining. I want to make it very clear that if we had interfered, they would be the first to be attacking us for interference. We let collective bargaining proceed.

The member opposite has referred to legislation that allows us to proceed. I explained yesterday that there is overriding legislation, and I am asking the page to send over copies of both bills and actually have real lawyers read them, and then they could advise the NDP whether or not they're maybe on pretty thin ice with regard to this.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Students have been put through the wringer because of this government's decision to sit on the sidelines, and \$500 doesn't even begin to cover the cost for—

Hon. Brad Duguid: So you wanted us to legislate them back earlier? Come clean.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development and Growth is warned.

Carry on.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Another student says, "\$500 is not enough for all the hardships students had to go through; \$500 doesn't cover rent not to mention all the other expenses during the strike. Money is nice but it doesn't solve the real issue which is a lack of respect for students."

Speaker, when will this Premier show students the respect they deserve and direct the colleges to remove the \$500 cap on the student hardship fund?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I have to say that it's kind of interesting to note that now there is real concern for students coming from that party. I can tell you, if you review Hansard, if you review the debates that we had about getting students back to the classroom, you will see there is no reference to students, except when they quote the Minister of Labour and myself on this issue.

So this new-found concern for students is refreshing. I'm just not so sure how sincere it is.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Instead of supporting students to move beyond the last five weeks of the strike, the help offered by this Liberal government is creating more chaos and confusion. The \$500 cap on the compensation for students to recover from the strike simply isn't enough. Students need to know today if the Premier will direct colleges to guarantee that anyone who wants to withdraw from their program and get their tuition refunded will not lose their place.

When will the Premier stop paying lip service to students and come up with an appropriate solution to the mess that students have been forced to endure over the past five weeks?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite might be interested to know that the hardship fund that we have put in place was informed by consultation with students. We sat down with students. It is the first time in the history of post-secondary education strikes that this kind of fund has been created.

I think the NDP is really struggling because they know that they blocked the return of college students to the classroom across this province. Half a million students, 500,000 students, know that the NDP blocked the return to classrooms. They're trying to pretend they are concerned for students, but it's very clear that they are not.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. As you know, the Ontario Forest Industries Association and a huge group of northern mayors, First Nation chiefs, union leaders and business leaders are here at Queen's Park today to set the record straight about the sustainability of forestry in Ontario.

Section 55 of the Endangered Species Act, which removes duplication and allows the forestry sector to operate under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, is set to expire next June. When the ESA was introduced, then-Minister David Ramsay promised that the forestry sector would continue to operate under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, which, since 1994, has ensured the forestry sector takes care of not only the forests but the animals that live there.

Minister, will you stand up for northern communities and First Nations, keep your word and let our sustainable forestry sector operate under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'm pleased to answer this question. Unlike the PCs, our government fully supports our forestry sector and the critical role that it plays in the success of the provincial economy. I also welcome so many members from forestry, industry, as well as the northern communities here with us today in the galleries.

Our government continues to work closely with our federal counterparts on caribou conservation and provides information to the federal government to support our shared conservation goals for caribou. Over the last few years, our government has invested \$11 million to support Ontario's caribou conservation plan. The investments allowed ministry researchers to participate in over 50 different research projects, including monitoring of caribou—

Interjection.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: We're now able to make more informed decisions about resource activities or development in areas where caribou live. In addition, we're providing this important information to the federal government to support their national progress report on this species.

In the supplementary, I'll talk about the exemption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member for Huron-Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I might suggest the minister speak with David Canfield. He'll give her a lesson on caribou.

Back to the minister: There are also many First Nations chiefs and representatives here today who support and are active in the forest industry. They too are concerned about the upcoming expiration of section 55 of the ESA and the lack of action on the part of this government to work towards a permanent solution. These indigenous leaders want what everybody wants: the opportunity to provide economic security and jobs for their communities. Yet the lack of action on the part of this government is standing in the way of that.

So, Speaker, I have to ask the minister: When will this government finally get to work on establishing a permanent solution to section 55 of the Endangered Species Act that is the result of a real partnership with stakeholders and right holders such as industry experts like OFIA and First Nations communities?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Our government continues to engage with indigenous organizations, the forestry industry, municipalities, environmental organizations and other stakeholders as we seek to provide a balanced and creative solution using their input. We had all of these sectors with us earlier this year in a meeting.

We will continue to uphold Ontario's high standards of sustainable forest management and creating opportunities for northern communities. In saying that, our government knows how important this sector is.

The exemption for the forestry industry expires in June 2018. Our ministry has been exploring possible solutions that minimize impacts on forest operations, protect species at risk and their habitats, and continue to provide economic opportunities for communities in northern Ontario, including those that our indigenous partners are involved with. They continue to be a valuable part of our forestry sector—and I thank you for the work that you do each and every day.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. In March, the privatized Hydro One filed its distribution rate applications for 2018 to 2022. Instead of reducing its rates, as the government promised would happen, the privatized Hydro One is seeking a 20% increase.

But there's more. On page 2038 of the application, we learn that Hydro One wants to install prepayment meters, which require the customer to pay first before they get any electricity. Everywhere that prepayment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families.

Will the government direct the Ontario Energy Board to prohibit Hydro One's use of prepayment meters?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As the OEB is the quasi-judicial organization and our regulator in the province, their mandate is to have the ratepayers' best interests in mind, and so we leave the decisions, when it comes to rate applications, to the OEB.

When it comes to Hydro One and their rate application, it is also important, Mr. Speaker, to say that the OEB is reviewing this and, again, there will be no

increase more than the cost of inflation for the next four years. That was part of the fair hydro plan that that member and that party voted against—making sure that ratepayers actually had that 25% reduction.

Talking about Hydro One customers, they can see anywhere between a 40% to 50% reduction because of the action that this government took to make sure that we protect ratepayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the minister: After Margaret Thatcher privatized the UK's water system, utilities began installing these prepayment meters. They hurt struggling families and they created a public health crisis.

The Premier has hurt families in Ontario by privatizing Hydro One.

Hydro One's installation of prepayment hydro meters would bypass Ontario's rules for disconnections. Hydro One won't have to disconnect anyone; the power will be cut off automatically if the customer doesn't feed the meter.

The UK finally banned prepayment meters. Will the government do the same thing and stop Hydro One from installing prepayment meters?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, this is an application that is before the OEB, and the OEB, as the quasi-judicial regulator of our electricity system and our energy system, is reviewing every application with the ratepayers' best interests in mind.

I know the member opposite mentioned the importance of protecting the interests of the people of Ontario, and that's what this government has done by bringing forward the fair hydro plan and reducing rates by 25%.

But on top of that, with the broadening of ownership of Hydro One, not only have we seen reductions of anywhere between 40% and 50%, but we're actually seeing a \$13.5-billion investment in the GTHA GO regional express rail. It's going to quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. There's \$5.3 billion in the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, \$1 billion in Ottawa's LRT, \$43 million in Waterloo regional transit and the list goes on.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Labour. This morning, we completed third reading debate on Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act. This concludes more than two and a half years of evaluating the nature of our workplaces, how they have changed and how our labour and employment laws must be amended to reflect those changes. This was a direction given to the minister by Premier Wynne in his mandate letter.

This consultation informed both the Changing Workplaces Review and the resulting legislation, Bill 148. We heard from countless groups and organizations across the province, many of whom are here today with us at Queen's Park. They include representatives from labour

unions, employers, workers' advocacy groups, employees, women's advocacy groups, doctors, economists and many, many more.

Will the minister please let us know how their input and feedback has been reflected in the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York for this very important question. Let me start by thanking all the advocates who have joined us today. They have worked so hard across this province. All they've asked for is to see respect and to see dignity in Ontario workplaces. They provided incredible insight to the special advisers right throughout the Changing Workplaces Review. We listened to that input. The feedback informed our decisions right throughout the province on things like raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and establishing paid sick days and five days of paid leave for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

We know the province's economy is doing very well, but not everybody is sharing in that prosperity. We still have people in this province working 35 to 40 hours a week, sometimes at two or three jobs, and they can't get by. It needs to change. Bill 148 is that change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I would like to take a moment to thank the Minister of Labour for his diligent work in bringing forward this extremely important piece of legislation.

Over the past two years and especially through this summer, I have spoken with so many of my constituents in the riding of Beaches–East York about the challenges they face at work and at home. Many have been left trying to support their families on a minimum wage that just doesn't go far enough. They need a living wage. They're trying to raise their children. They're saving for their children's education, and they're wondering how they are going to pay all their bills, let alone get ahead.

Our province's economy is doing extremely well, and we cannot forget everyone is not sharing in this prosperity. Speaker, I am proud that we have committed to help families in Beaches–East York and across the province of Ontario through the measures that are included in Bill 148. Frankly, I am shocked that anyone in this House could withhold support for this very important bill.

Will the minister please let us know what the supporting legislation means to Ontarians?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York. Again, I do want to thank all members of the House for the advocacy and the support they've shown on this legislation.

I agree, it's shocking to think that anybody in this House would deny support for this bill. It increases the minimum wage for 1.6 million Ontarians. It ensures equal pay for work of equal value, more predictability, and modernizing our organization practices.

1120

This is what our government believes in, but the opposition would like to go back to the Harris years, to when the minimum wage was frozen at \$6.85. They'd

like to roll back our commitment to \$15 an hour. We're not backing down. We're not going to back down. We're committed to ensuring the best of all futures for our families. We're standing up for the rights of all Ontario workers. We're committed to fighting for Ontario families, and we stand opposed to those who would block these changes.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the minister responsible for early years and child care. Parents across Ontario are constantly struggling to find affordable child care options, and yet a Globe and Mail article today reports that the government is placing more restrictions on what qualifies as after-school care. Under the minister's restrictions, businesses offering unique programming, such as theatre and dance, will only be able to offer programs three days a week. Children will go to school five days a week. Working families need options.

How does limiting after-school programming help hard-working families already struggling to find after-school programs for their children?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this very important question. I know the situation with Sprouts kids has parents concerned, and I want them to know we are working hard to resolve this issue with them with little to no disruption to the kids out there who are needing before- and after-school care.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something. When it comes to children in our province in care, safety is our number one priority, absolutely. Safety is our number one priority, and we brought in rules based on recommendations made by the Ombudsman in 2014. Those recommendations came about because of the death of a child in care.

So we took those recommendations and moved forward almost right away with a set of rules that we were going to bring in place. We gave municipalities and everyone else two years to transition, and those rules came into effect three months ago.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is offensive that this minister is comparing after-school programs that provide theatre, arts, and math tutoring to unregulated care that happened. It's offensive to those businesses.

While parents are struggling to find child care they can afford, you are limiting their options. This government appears to be on a mission to reduce the choices and availability for after-school care in Ontario. To quote a mom, "It feels really wrong to have the government come in and tell you what you're able to choose for your child for an after-school program."

How many after-school programs will be shut down, leaving families with fewer options for after-school care?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am once again really pleased to stand up and answer this question. Frankly, it exposes how little the member opposite understands what's going on. There is a wide range of programs that are offered when it comes to child care. We have child

care, we have before- and after-school programs, and we have recreational programs. We are making sure that when it comes to our children being in a safe environment, they are protected. Those children who are five years of age and under have different sets of rules than those who are six to 12 years of age.

I also want to point out that we have introduced before- and after-school care to our schools where there is sufficient demand across the province—60,000 more children in Ontario are now accessing spaces. That is as of September 1. We worked hard to deliver that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. The crisis in child care in this province continues today. In the east end of Toronto, parents of 97 children were given one week's notice to find alternative before- and after-school care after Sprouts, a neighbourhood recreation and walk-safe program, was found to be in contravention of the Child Care and Early Years Act. Midway through the school year, east-end parents were left with no full-week options. The government created chaos for these families, taking days to respond to parents' serious concerns, and because of this uproar, the ministry last night made an exception.

Toronto councillor Janet Davis has said it best: the "province has totally bungled the school age program rules."

It begs the question: Will this government be cracking down on every karate program and dance studio in the province of Ontario now?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the minister responsible for early years and child care.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Once again, I'm pleased to rise and answer this question, because it is so important. We are absolutely transforming the way we are delivering child care in this province. We have been doing it for more than a year. Those pieces that we are moving forward with are under way.

I have to say that the member opposite and the party opposite are a little late coming to the party. We have moved forward with a framework that is now in place and that is expanding the child care in this province by 100,000 additional spaces. In addition to that, we have moved forward with \$1.6 billion in capital funding. That will now move in to place in 2018 and will build spaces.

Right now in this year, the 2017-18 year, we have moved forward with \$200 million, and 24,000 spaces are being created in this year alone. In addition to that, we are making fundamental changes to ensure that we are building a solid foundation when it comes to children and child care in this province.

And when it comes to this instance of before- and after-school care and Sprouts kids, my officials are there right now, working with them to ensure that they are compliant and that those children have care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again to the Acting Premier: One parent with a daughter in the Sprouts program said that the move to limit Sprouts' before- and after-school care was made by "a government that doesn't really understand or support a working family."

Parents across the province who rely on recreational programs like Sprouts do so because they are unable to find licensed and affordable child care for their children; certainly they can't after 14 years of this Liberal government. With other neighbourhood programs full for the remainder of the school year, these east-end Toronto parents were left with no comprehensive options.

Ontario families deserve quality, affordable and accessible child care in this province. What is the government's plan for authorized recreational programs? Or will Ontario parents in this case be expected to lurch from crisis to crisis across this province?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Once again, I'm really pleased to answer this question, because it's so important.

First of all, absolutely, when the situation with Sprouts kids came to light we were concerned about those parents and those kids, and we are working hard to ensure that we resolve the issue. Frankly, I was a bit surprised, because these rules came into force September 1, and for the last two years, various programs around the province have been working to transition. My teams have been working with them to ensure that we do it and help them get on track. Right now, we are working with these families.

But I do want to point out something: When you have children that are five, four and three years old in care, and when you are lumping them in with six- to 12-year-olds, the rules are different. You cannot bypass those child care rules. They are there to make sure that we are supporting those children, and they are strict because of safety.

ONTARIO PLACE

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The province has an ambitious vision to transform Ontario Place into a modern, vibrant, year-round waterfront destination that builds on a legacy of innovation, fun and live music, and engages residents and visitors of all ages.

This summer, we reopened the Trillium Park and William G. Davis Trail, which adds 7.5 acres of green space to Toronto's waterfront. That's a real benefit to residents of Liberty Village, Little Norway and Fort York. We hosted four diverse festivals in the spring and summer to celebrate the province's 150th anniversary.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can she tell us more about what she announced earlier this month pertaining to the reopening of the iconic Cinesphere theatre?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you to the member for his question. It's been an extremely exciting year for Ontario Place. For over 40 years, Ontario Place has been

a cultural centrepiece and a hub for activities for all Ontarians to enjoy. I'm excited to have this opportunity to speak to the iconic Cinesphere, an exciting part of our Ontario Place revitalization.

I had the pleasure of welcoming Ontarians back to the Cinesphere earlier this month. In doing so, we were able to introduce a new generation to the world's first permanent IMAX theatre. We revamped the space to make it a year-round facility that everyone can enjoy, making upgrades to the entrance, acoustics, the lighting, and there's a new digital projector as well. That's what makes the Cinesphere truly unique, because it is a Canadian innovation. The IMAX 70-millimetre film experience is truly a visual experience that is unparalleled.

1130

Finally, we're enhancing access to the Cinesphere too, by partnering with charitable organizations so that the community can come free of charge, so that everyone can enjoy the unique experience that Ontario Place and the Cinesphere bring.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Minister, for the answer. It's wonderful to hear all the great work that's being done to transform Ontario Place into a lively recreational and cultural space for everyone to enjoy. After all, the legacy of Ontario Place was and continues to be one of cultural engagement and discovery.

The development that we see on our beautiful waterfront is exciting, and to hear that many Ontarians have already been down to the site, whether it's to watch the great flicks at the iconic Cinesphere or go for a bike ride along the park and trail, makes us want to build on this great momentum even further.

Speaker, to the minister: Can she explain to this House how her ministry will continue to make the vision of a revitalized Ontario Place a reality?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: As the member mentioned, the vision for a revitalized Ontario Place is one of lively cultural engagement. We call it Ontario Place for a reason: It's a place for all Ontarians.

Our next steps in the revitalization plan will continue to build on that principle. I'm happy to say that we're now officially in the design phase to create a wonderful green space at the 20-acre Celebration Common at Ontario Place. We heard what Ontarians wanted to see, and we listened. The space will be transformed and be used for festivals, community events and recreation.

The ambitious vision for a modern, vibrant, year-round waterfront destination is well under way, and we look forward to continuing to welcome all Ontarians to what is truly a wonderful jewel on the waterfront of Canada's largest city.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. While we pay to send our green energy across the border, Ontario auto dealers are being forced to pay here at home for yet another Liberal green

scheme—of course, long on promises and taxpayer funding, but short on results. Boasting \$14,000 rebates per luxury electric car, and of course the minister's own electric car lot, the Liberal electric vehicle program has become a costly vanity project propped up by taxpayers.

Now we hear that the rebate delivered at point of sale has auto dealers paying out of pocket while they await promised government reimbursement that's being held back. Dealers in the GTA alone are owed well over \$2 million.

Will the minister explain why he is making auto dealers pay the price for his electric car subsidies?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his question. I couldn't help but notice from the tone of the question, if not the exact language, that it seems implied in the question that that member and his leader certainly don't seem to support the idea that we want to deploy more zero-GHG-emitting vehicles on our roads. Our government could not stand more starkly in contrast to that backward-looking assertion on their part.

What we've seen here in Ontario since we've introduced even more generous electric vehicle incentives through our Electric Vehicle Incentive Program—which, as he pointed out, offers up to \$14,000 for those individuals who choose to buy or lease one of these, and up to \$1,000 by way of rebate for those families—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're subsidizing the rich.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —for those families that choose to install home-based charging infrastructure.

What we've seen is a dramatic increase in terms of the uptake amongst those families, especially as more products come online that are more affordable for those middle-class families across the province who want to do their part to fight climate change, unlike that member and his leader.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Talk about prompt payment. We just don't think that auto dealers should be on the hook to pay for Liberal subsidies.

This program, of course, has been a wheel-spinning exercise since they rolled it out. The Liberals promised 485 electric vehicle charging stations by last spring. A third of them weren't ready for the summer driving season. They promised 20% of the Ontario public service vehicles would be electric by 2020. In 2017, they are at just 4%. They promised to pay drivers massive incentives to drive electric cars off the lot. Now they're failing to deliver those rebates to the auto dealer, who is, of course, caught now in the middle.

Minister, why are you leaving Ontario auto dealers to foot the bill for your failing program, and when will you actually pay them back: \$2 million alone in the GTA for auto dealers? When will you pay them back?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, I think it would be far more forthright of that member to stand up and just declare he and his leader don't support the purchase or

lease of electric vehicles in the province, that they don't support supporting middle-class families in this province who want to do their part to fight climate change.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Conestoga is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, Speaker, they're making it abundantly clear, using the code language that's embedded in that question, to make it, again, abundantly clear that they don't support these initiatives, which is a real shame, because we know, as we put more incentives into the marketplace, that more and more middle-income families are actually making the choice to do their part to fight climate change by purchasing or leasing these vehicles.

I will say that, along with the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program and the EVCO program, which is deploying a charging network right across the province—500 charging stations across 250 unique locations right across the province—we're making it easier every single day to support those Ontario families who want to do their part to fight climate change.

GO TRANSIT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Deputy Premier. For years, Hamiltonians have been promised frequent all-day, two-way GO rail service, and we're still waiting.

Now it looks like we're going to wait even longer. Despite spending \$80 million on two new GO stations in Hamilton, it seems the government plans to leave these stations empty most of the time. Hamiltonians are calling them "ghost" stations.

Why hasn't this government made frequent GO service from these new stations a priority?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I appreciate the question. I always love having the opportunity to stand in my place and talk about the fact that our government is, in fact, building GO regional express rail, Speaker. I will say that perhaps that member would want to speak to her colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. He has told me many times in the past he's delighted that our government has decided to build an additional GO station at Confederation in Stoney Creek. Of course, thanks almost exclusively to the advocacy—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, thanks almost exclusively to the long-standing advocacy of my colleague from St. Catharines, our government has decided to extend GO train service all the way to Niagara Falls. That's what they will continue to be focused on.

I would point out that there is a section of the Lakeshore West corridor—that member may not know this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —that is actually currently owned by CN—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry? I hope so. Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: The purpose of spending \$80 million on two new GO stations in Hamilton is not to provide photo ops for Liberal politicians. The purpose is to provide frequent GO service that Hamiltonians have been promised for years. Instead, we get ghost stations.

Exactly when can Hamiltonians expect all-day, two-way GO service through these new stations?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I have no clue why the member from Hamilton Mountain wants to so vociferously attack the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, but that's a question they can sort out in their caucus office.

As I was saying in my initial answer, that member may not realize that there is a portion of what's known as the Lakeshore West corridor that's currently owned by CN, and they carry an awful lot of freight on that section of the Lakeshore West corridor. Our government, through Metrolinx, is working closely with both CN and CP to make sure that we can rationalize freight service and ultimately deliver more frequent GO train service to Niagara Falls, to Bowmanville, to Barrie, and ultimately through Stoney Creek all the way out to other places in Hamilton and beyond.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Start the clock. New question.

1140

WASTE REDUCTION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Each year, Ontarians generate about 3.7 million tonnes of waste from food and organic materials, with more than 60% sent to landfill. In fact, food and organic waste make up approximately one third of Ontario's total waste stream.

Our government recognizes that this needs to change. Last week, our government introduced our proposed Food and Organic Waste Framework, which outlines our path forward for reducing food waste and increasing the recovery of organic materials in Ontario. The framework is currently posted to the Environmental Registry for public consultation.

Can the minister please explain to the House how our proposed organics framework would help reduce organic waste while benefiting Ontario's economy?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the hard-working member from Davenport for that very important question. As the member mentioned, last week my ministry introduced our proposed Food and Organic Waste Framework. The proposed framework is the next step in moving Ontario toward a circular economy, an economy where food and organic waste is no longer seen as waste but as a resource.

We know that recovering organic resources is not only beneficial to the environment but also builds our economy. Research from the UK shows that there is \$14 of financial benefit for every \$1 invested in food waste prevention.

Our proposed organic framework has the potential to create new jobs in Ontario. Current efforts to divert food and organic waste create about 1,700 jobs in Ontario as we speak.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the minister for that answer. We know that managing waste and reusing our resources is a critical part of achieving our goals to protect our land and environment, create a greener future for Ontarians and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

When food and organic waste breaks down in landfills, it produces greenhouse gases. In 2015, greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector accounted for about 5% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the province. That amounts to 8.6 megatonnes of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere.

If global food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide, after the United States and China. That's why Ontario is proposing to take strong action to prevent organic and food waste from ending up in landfills. Can the minister please describe to the House how recovering organic and food resources would benefit Ontario?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you again to the member from Davenport for this question. Our food and organics framework is the next step toward moving toward a waste-free Ontario. If we doubled the province's current resource recovery rate of food and organic waste, we could reduce an additional 1.1 megatonnes in greenhouse gas emissions. That's the equivalent of removing approximately 260,000 cars from Ontario's roads each year. That's each year, Mr. Speaker.

It's bringing us closer to our climate change goals. Under our climate change action plan, we're moving forward to reduce greenhouse gases and stimulate economic growth. Meanwhile, members opposite have no real plan to reduce organic waste and keep resources out of landfills in Ontario, and they have no real plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and no real plan to fight climate change.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. According to the Toronto Star, inmates at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre are suing the government. Between the years of 2010 and 2013, there has been a pattern of systematic negligence. The lawsuit cites overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

Sadly, this is not an isolated problem. A recent report by the independent adviser on corrections reform describes shocking abuses and disorder in Ontario's detention centres. Detention centres are overcrowded, and cell-block violence is a huge problem everywhere.

Minister, it doesn't appear as though you have the backs of our COs. You aren't giving them the resources they need to carry out their duties safely. I've said before that minor tinkering isn't going to fix the crisis in corrections.

Minister, you're failing our correctional officers. What specifically are you going to do to solve these problems?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much to the member for that question. As he knows, I cannot comment specifically on anything, but what I want to share with this House is our full commitment to moving forward in the transformation of our corrections system.

Mr. Speaker, we have made investments in the past few years, and we are going forward in bringing legislation in this House based on recommendations from Mr. Howard Sapers and from the Ombudsman. We have engaged also with our stakeholders—our union representatives, our indigenous communities—in bringing the biggest transformation in Ontario's history when it comes to our corrections system.

I was also very happy all throughout the summer to visit our institutions and meet with front-line workers. I want to say thank you to the men and women who work in our institutions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister: You haven't been listening to the correctional officers around the province. On the Liberals' watch, prisoners like Adam Capay have been held in solitary confinement while awaiting trial. Capay was held for four years in conditions so degrading that previous inmates of the same cell died. But the Liberals didn't care. They ignored repeated coroners' inquests warning of unsafe conditions. It only became a problem for this government when Capay's case reached the newspapers.

Our correctional officers have brought the same problems to this ministry's attention many times before. The Ontario Human Rights Commission is now suing the ministry over the Capay case, and inmates are suing you for systematic negligence. Minister, you're not listening to our front-line staff: the correctional officers who are the boots on the ground and who face behavioural uncertainty with inmates daily.

The Premier claims that she wants to be remembered as a social justice Premier. Minister, does this appalling state of corrections pass for social justice?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I know I have limited time, but the question from that member is troubling for me in one sense. Let's remember the time when this party was in power. I heard this, actually, all throughout my tour of our institutions this summer. We heard about the failed privatization of our jails and the cuts of social programs that used to exist in our institutions. I heard about the farming program and the construction programs that were cut under that government, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know what? We have made a full commitment in bringing forward the most transformational, policy-driven, new corrections systems act in this House this fall. We have engaged with not only our front-line work-

ers but with everyone in our system to make sure that we get this right for all—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

VISITORS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just want to welcome all of those labour activists and labour leaders who are here today joining us for the vote for Bill 148 coming this afternoon. Welcome, everyone. It's good to see you here, and thank you for all your hard work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'm happy to introduce today, in the members' east gallery, a member of the Cambridge Professional Fire Fighters' Association and a good friend and neighbour of mine, John Holman. Welcome to Queen's Park.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I just want to ensure that my record correctly reflects that it's 16,000 before- and after-school spaces in schools. I understand it may possibly say 60,000. It's 16,000.

VISITORS

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I just want to recognize a dear friend of mine, Ibrahim Daniyal, who is in the members' gallery.

DEFERRED VOTES

FAIR WORKPLACES, BETTER JOBS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL ET DE MEILLEURS EMPLOIS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Mr. Duguid moved third reading of Bill 148, An Act to

amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, and the Labour Relations Act, 1995, and to make related amendments to other Acts.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwała, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Paul
Mori, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhari, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael

Hillier, Randy
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
McDonnell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy

Romano, Ross
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 67; the nays are 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 42 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1158 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 21, 2017, Mr. Mauro moved government notice of motion

number 42 relating to allocation of time on Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Duguid, Brad | McMahon, Eleanor |
| Anderson, Granville | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | McMeekin, Ted |
| Baker, Yvan | Fraser, John | Milczyn, Peter Z. |
| Ballard, Chris | Hoggarth, Ann | Moridi, Reza |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Hoskins, Eric | Naidoo-Harris, Indira |
| Bradley, James J. | Hunter, Mitzie | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Chiarelli, Bob | Jaczek, Helena | Potts, Arthur |
| Colle, Mike | Kiwala, Sophie | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Coteau, Michael | Lalonde, Marie-France | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Crack, Grant | Leal, Jeff | Sandals, Liz |
| Damerla, Dipika | MacCharles, Tracy | Sousa, Charles |
| Del Duca, Steven | Malhi, Harinder | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Delaney, Bob | Mangat, Amrit | Thibeault, Glenn |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie | Martins, Cristina | Vernile, Daiene |
| Dhillon, Vic | Matthews, Deborah | Wong, Soo |
| Dickson, Joe | Mauro, Bill | Zimmer, David |
| Dong, Han | McGarry, Kathryn | |

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gélinas, France | Pettapiece, Randy |
| Arnott, Ted | Gretzky, Lisa | Romano, Ross |
| Bailey, Robert | Hardeman, Ernie | Sattler, Peggy |
| Barrett, Toby | Harris, Michael | Scott, Laurie |
| Bisson, Gilles | Hillier, Randy | Smith, Todd |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon | Jones, Sylvia | Tabuns, Peter |
| Clark, Steve | MacLaren, Jack | Taylor, Monique |
| Coe, Lorne | Mantha, Michael | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| DiNovo, Cheri | McDonnell, Jim | Vanthof, John |
| Fedeli, Victor | McNaughton, Monte | Walker, Bill |
| Fife, Catherine | Miller, Norm | Wilson, Jim |
| Forster, Cindy | Natyshak, Taras | Yakubski, John |
| French, Jennifer K. | Nicholls, Rick | Yurek, Jeff |
| Gates, Wayne | Oosterhoff, Sam | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 50; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have two members of North Bay Fire and Emergency Services here. We have Derrick Desilets and Paul Auger from North Bay.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Ms. Laurie Scott: As you know, this year we are proud to be celebrating the 100th anniversary of women having gained the right to vote in Ontario. This was a momentous milestone in the history of democracy in our province. The voices and votes of women have helped build this province, and I'm pleased to continue celebrating this important milestone.

Many may not know that the Progressive Conservative Caucus has a long history of milestones when it comes to advancing women's rights in Ontario. It was Premier William Hearst's Progressive Conservative government that granted women the right to vote in 1917. The province's first woman cabinet minister, Margaret Birch, and the first woman federal cabinet minister, Ellen Fairclough from Hamilton, were Progressive Conservatives.

My colleagues and I are proud to continue to this vital legacy, and we commit ourselves to helping Ontario women succeed.

This evening, as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations, I'm honoured to be hosting a reception to recognize our province's amazing women, past and present, representing a wide variety of backgrounds.

I encourage all of us here in the Legislature to take the opportunity of this milestone to celebrate the achievements of Ontario women and to work together to foster even greater success in the future.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We have the honour today of having many guests come in from northern Ontario—mayors, chiefs, union leaders and others—in order to talk about the good job that northern Ontario has done and our forestry industry has done when it comes to managing our forests.

We have all heard of the legislation the Endangered Species Act. Well, northern Ontario was there way before there was ever an act under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, which was put in place in 1992-93. Forest companies, by way of forest management plans, are having to manage species at risk and other factors when it comes to figuring out how you're going to approach the allowable cut and the sustainable cut in the forests.

We are world leaders when it comes how we manage our forests, how we approach the sustainability of those forests and how we balance off the interests of all of the various stakeholders. That's why we have supported and others have supported—and I believe the government supports as well—the idea that under the Endangered Species Act that in fact the Crown Forest Sustainability Act be the vehicle by which we manage those particular issues.

I am proud to be a northerner. I am proud to have been a member of the government that passed the Crown For-

est Sustainability Act and put in place the gold standard when it comes to forest management in this province. We were environmentalists before people started talking about it. I think we all understood in the Legislature, all of us who worked on it, that this would be groundbreaking and it would bring us well into the next century so that we can do the right things when it comes to all the stakeholders and the forests, the animals, the people, the ecosystem, and do what's right for our province.

NIGHTTIME SANTA PARADE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: This year, my riding of Kingston and the Islands celebrated its 14th annual Nighttime Santa Parade, and it was absolutely the best one yet. The floats were outstanding and showcased some of Kingston's amazing community partners, non-profits, multi-cultural groups, local radio and TV stations and businesses. As the streets filled with some of our favourite holiday songs—and I won't sing for you; don't worry—and cheers, it was also a great time to visit local business vendors and indulge in a delicious cup of hot chocolate.

This year, my office partnered with the city of Kingston, Easter Seals Ontario southeastern Ontario, and Rotary Clubs of Kingston to create three dedicated, accessible spaces, or comfort zones, for families and those with disabilities, as well as ASL signers. This initiative was taken on by Kelly Wiley in my office, and I want to thank you, Kelly, for all of your work. You were absolutely awesome. It ensured that the parade was safe, accessible and enjoyable for all.

I'm so proud to report as well that we raised \$3,000 for the Kingston food bank and almost 3,000 pounds of non-perishable food items.

I would like to thank the city of Kingston, sponsors and organizers for their exceptional parade this year. Thank you as well to the Frontenac paramedics. I was especially proud of the four-year-old driver of their mini-ambulance, who happened to be my grandson.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The city of North Bay has taken a very definitive stand on the recommendations of this government's expert panel on public health, especially as they relate to the integration of public health units and local health integration networks.

A recent resolution passed by city council notes that "there was a lack of consultation with northern Ontario municipalities or consideration of the diverse needs of northerners." It further notes that "regionalization of public health units with centralized decision-making will have significant negative consequences for local public health and municipalities." As well, it points out that "the current cost-shared provincial/municipal funding formula (75%-25%) will not support the implementation of the proposed recommendations."

They have resolved that "North Bay city council does not support the recommendations of the expert panel and

is in agreement with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario ... urging the Minister of Health ... not to adopt them."

Health units need to integrate more with health care agencies—no question. But this is not the route to take. This is another example of this government not putting patients first, especially in northern and rural Ontario.

DIABETES TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I tend to be a very patient person, but when it comes to offloading devices for diabetic people with an ulcer on their foot, I can't take this anymore.

Every four hours in our province, somebody has a leg or foot amputated. That is 2,000 people who, every single year in Ontario, have a foot amputated because of an ulcer that won't heal. Yet we have a body of evidence that shows us if we were to fund offloading devices, most of those amputations would be prevented. Most of those people would heal and be able to walk on their two legs like you and me.

The Canadian Diabetes Association put that body of evidence to the Minister of Health in 2015. The Minister of Health received it and said, "We need to do our own research," which they did through Health Quality Ontario. Health Quality Ontario handed their report to the Ministry of Health in 2016, and here we are, in November 2017, and Ontario has done nothing.

I can't take this anymore, Speaker. Something has to be done. I want this minister to listen to the body of evidence and do the right thing and fund offloading devices like Diabetes Canada tells them to do and like Health Quality Ontario has told them to do. If they don't do this soon, there will be hundreds of amputees on the front lawn of Queen's Park, showing this government what inaction looks like.

HOSPICE SIMCOE

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: This April, Hospice Simcoe in my riding of Barrie added a new staff member to their team: a golden Labrador named Daisy. She is a three-year-old certified COPE-trained service dog who spent the first two years of her life training for the day she would begin her career as a full-time facility dog.

Daisy is the first full-time service facility dog to work at a hospice in Ontario. Service dogs can reduce anxiety and provide comfort and are wonderful listeners. Daisy plays a special role for our youngest residents and visitors as an extraordinary companion for them, their siblings and other family members.

One widow of a resident sent a letter to the hospice thanking Daisy for helping to calm her down the morning that her husband died. She wrote, "She came straight over to me and put her head in my lap and then lay on my feet. What a wonderful feeling of comfort she gave me. My family were all there, but that beautiful dog knew how I was feeling and ignored everyone else there."

1510

The adoption fees for Daisy were provided by the Tonglen Foundation, and her veterinary care is donated by Dr. Patricia Lechten. She spends her time with residents and their visitors, is a companion to those attending grief and support sessions, and is a valued support for the staff and the volunteers. Welcome, Daisy.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Water Wells First is an organization of concerned rural people whose wells are being contaminated by pile-driving for industrial turbines in north Chatham-Kent. They have been fighting a water contamination issue for over a year. Of note: This problem did not exist before the installation of industrial wind turbines in Dover and Chatham townships.

The bedrock is made of Kettle Point black shale, known to contain uranium, copper, lead and arsenic, just to name a few. Pile-driving vibrations break up this toxic shale below the groundwater and contaminate the water. Area residents can't drink, bathe or wash their clothes because of this. Local wells are being poisoned as the government continues to allow pile-driving. At last count, 14 wells have been contaminated. My colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and I have visited farms and spoken with affected residents where their water is bad, and we've seen the effects first-hand. What must be tested are the black particulates found in the water.

Therefore, in accordance with the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, I am demanding that the Ministry of Health conduct a health-hazard investigation, stop the erection of turbines in the North Kent Pattern Energy project, and stop the construction of turbines in Otter Creek area, where height variances will be 200 feet higher than current turbines, putting endangered species at risk. If the government continues to allow the erection of these massive turbines, then it's clear to me that they are only interested in money generation and protecting their failed Green Energy Act. I say, protect the people and future generations, protect their property and, mostly, protect our pure, clean underground source of water.

COLUMBUS CENTRE

Mr. Mike Colle: First of all, I'd like to welcome a former member from, I think, Downsview, right? Odoardo Di Santo is here. He's part of a citizens' group fighting the demolition of the heart and soul of the Italian community, the Columbus Centre: Pietro Cugliari, Joseph Baglieri, Elio Costa and Victor Francescuti. Also, a renowned constitutional lawyer, Paul Cavalluzzo, is here. Today they are here telling the Minister of Education that they don't want \$32 million of taxpayer money used by the Catholic school board to team up with a developer to destroy the Columbus Centre. That's what they've said, very clearly.

The Catholic school board has 16 acres to build a new Dante high school and a new Regina Mundi elementary

school. Build it on those 16 acres; don't build it by demolishing the Columbus Centre. You destroy our art gallery; you destroy our library; you destroy our architecturally significant rotunda.

So they are telling the Minister of Education, who I know is here listening: Don't let the Catholic school board demolish and destroy the heart and soul of the Italian community, the Columbus Centre. Let the Catholic school board release the documents, the secret agreement, that they signed with the developers to demolish the Columbus Centre. Release the documents. Make them public. That's what they're saying.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: This year, I'd like to recognize a number of people from the riding of Huron-Bruce for excellence in something that they absolutely love.

November 3 to 12 of this year was the 95th Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. It is always an event of the year when the country comes to the city, something where those in agriculture come together and celebrate the very best of the best. Over 20,000 visitors and 6,000 animals walked through the royal doors. Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and horses alike, plus crops, vegetables, food and chefs, and many attractions over and above that make the Royal what is truly known as a royal experience.

There are many strong competitors that come from the riding of Huron-Bruce. Traditional names tend to be McConnell, McIntyre, Gilchrist and MacPherson. There is a common theme amongst all those families. But I'd like to recognize the fact that we have new people cropping up, getting to the Royal and having the opportunity to stretch their legs. Some of those people are Alex and Troy Coultres and Ashley Higgins of Brussels. I'd even like to give a shout-out to Loyal Line Limousin of Goderich, who took first place with their junior Limousin.

What I find most interesting is that the Royal is a celebration of agriculture and agri-food products. This year we had chefs from Eddington's of Exeter and Part II Bistro in Blyth. They did incredibly well in their respective competitions, and Cowbell beer stood tall in their respective division as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I move to reports by committees, this Speaker has started a tradition of always introducing former members, and it was leap-frogged. I want to introduce Odoardo Di Santo, from Downsview in the 30th, 31st and 32nd Parliaments. Thank you very much for joining us, former member.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thanks, Mike.

I would also like to recognize the member from Prince Edward–Hastings on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome some special guests who have come all the way here this afternoon from Napanee: Dave and Gwen Mills. I'll be introducing legislation in honour of their late son, Garrett, in a few moments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're with us.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 142, An Act to amend the Construction Lien Act /
Projet de loi 142, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le privilège
dans l'industrie de la construction.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GARRETT'S LEGACY ACT (REQUIREMENTS FOR MOVABLE SOCCER GOALS), 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE LEGS DE GARRETT (EXIGENCES RELATIVES AUX BUTS DE SOCCER MOBILES)

Mr. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to provide for safety measures respecting movable soccer goals / Projet de loi 180, Loi prévoyant des mesures de sécurité pour les buts de soccer mobiles.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Todd Smith: Garrett's Legacy Act is a private member's bill named in honour of 15-year-old Garrett Mills of Napanee. He was killed this past May when a movable goal tipped over, fracturing his skull and killing him instantly.

The act establishes requirements for organizations or entities respecting the secure installation of movable

soccer goals that they make available for use by members of the public. The act provides for inspections and requires the minister to establish a mechanism to report complaints for alleged noncompliance with the act.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 20 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister Jaczek moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 20 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

1520

PETITIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Bill Walker: "Make Moratorium on School Closures Retroactive to 2016-17.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, declared on June 28, 2017, a province-wide moratorium on future school closures based on the results of the spring engagement process, stating that the pupil accommodation review process was flawed and should be overhauled; and

"Whereas during the 2016-2017 school year this flawed pupil accommodation review process was used to close schools; and

"Whereas some of these schools are not scheduled to close until the end of June 2018, so that staffing for these schools remains in place for 2017-2018; and

"Whereas it would be consistent with the spirit of the moratorium and the reason for the overhaul of the PAR process, to stop those closures announced after September 2016; and

"Whereas the 2015 Auditor General's report section 4.3.2 (p. 299) recommends greater funds be put towards maintenance of current schools; and

"Further, whereas the current funding formula does not properly address the needs of schools within rural and northern communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"1. Reverse the closure decisions for all schools where those decisions were made after September 1, 2016;

"2. Provide fair and equitable pupil accommodation review processes that school boards must follow, recognising the unique needs of rural and northern communities; and

"3. Review the current funding formula with a goal of developing fair and equitable funding formulae for all rural, northern and urban schools."

I'll affix my name and send it with page Katrina.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

"—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

"—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

"—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

"—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

"—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

"—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

"—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"—To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

"—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response."

I wholeheartedly support this petition and give it to page Davis to deliver to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that's addressed to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas podiatrists treat foot pain and injuries in women at twice the rate they treat men;

"Whereas Ontario podiatrists see far too many patients with injuries from the workplace that are entirely avoidable, and are caused by wearing footwear that is inappropriate or outright unsafe such as high heels;

"Whereas clinical evidence demonstrates that wearing high-heeled shoes causes a much higher incidence of bunions, musculoskeletal pain and injury than those who do not wear high heels;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To put their best foot forward, and take swift action to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from dress codes that mandate unsafe footwear in the workplace."

Mr. Speaker, I'm putting my best foot forward and putting my signature on this petition to send to the table.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of, at this point, over 267 residents. I have signatures ranging from Windsor all the way through to Ottawa. It's a petition to widen the 401 and to install median barriers from Tilbury to Elgin county.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2009 the Ministry of Transportation received environmental clearance for six lanes of the 401 between Tilbury to Elgin county;

"Whereas the 401 between Tilbury and London was already known as 'carnage alley' due to the high rate of collisions and fatalities there;

"Whereas current work being done on the 401 between Tilbury and Ridgeway will reduce the road to a single lane for up to three years thus making this stretch a serious safety concern;

"Whereas there have already been four deaths, nine serious injuries requiring hospitalization and over eight collisions this summer within the one-lane construction area;

"Whereas the government of the day pledged to invest \$13.5 billion in highway improvements and has sharply increased the fees for driver permits and licence renewal fees which are used for highway maintenance and improvements;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To commit to upgrading the 401 from four to six lanes and install a median barrier from Tilbury to Elgin county."

I approve of this and will affix my name and give it to page Adam.

PRÉVENTION DU TABAGISME CHEZ LES JEUNES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier Richard Simon de Chelmsford dans mon comté pour la pétition.

« Attendu que

« Au cours des 10 dernières années en Ontario, 86 % de tous les films montrant des fumeurs étaient accessibles aux jeunes.

« Le fait que l'industrie du tabac se sert depuis longtemps du grand écran pour promouvoir l'usage du tabac ...

« Selon un rapport scientifique rendu public ... environ 185 000 enfants de l'Ontario commenceront à fumer après avoir vu des personnages fumer dans des films.

« Plus de 59 000 fumeurs ainsi recrutés finiront par mourir d'un cancer, d'un AVC, d'une maladie du cœur ou d'emphysème liés à l'usage du tabac », ce qui coûtera 1,1 milliard de dollars ...

« Le gouvernement de l'Ontario s'est fixé comme objectif d'atteindre le taux de tabagisme le plus faible au Canada.

« 79 % ... des Ontariens et Ontariennes appuient l'interdiction de l'usage du tabac dans les films classés dans les catégories G, PG, 14A.

« La ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs a le pouvoir de modifier ... les règlements pris en application de la Loi sur le classement des films ... »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative:

« Que le Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux examine les façons dont on pourrait modifier la Loi sur le classement des films pour réduire l'usage du tabac dans les films classés dans les catégories qui conviennent aux enfants et aux adolescents et ...

« Que le comité donne un compte rendu de ses constatations à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario et que la ministre des Services gouvernementaux ... prépare une réponse. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Andrew de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are currently no traffic signals at the intersection of Guelph Street (Highway 7) and McFarlane Drive/Hall Road in Georgetown;

"Whereas Guelph Street (Highway 7) is an extremely busy corridor and the town of Halton Hills mayor, council and staff, as well as area residents have expressed serious concerns about the safety at the intersection of Guelph Street and McFarlane Drive/Hall Road;

"Whereas existing residents of McFarlane Drive and Hall Road, including many seniors who live in the Sands condominium building, are required to turn onto Guelph Street (Highway 7) at McFarlane Drive/Hall Road to leave their homes;

"Whereas extensive new residential development on both the north and south side of Guelph Street is occurring and will be fully occupied by early 2018, which will only increase the volume of traffic turning onto Guelph Street (Highway 7) at McFarlane Drive/Hall Road;

"Whereas pedestrian volumes are increasing, with a large portion of both seniors and children with no ability to safely cross the intersection of Guelph Street (Highway 7) and McFarlane Drive/Hall Road;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To fund and install traffic signals at the intersection of Guelph Street (Highway 7) and McFarlane Drive/Hall Road as soon as possible."

I, of course, agree with this petition and have also affixed my name to it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is called "Conduct a Full Inquiry into Seniors Care in the Province of Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas upwards of 30,000 Ontarians are on the wait-list for long-term care (LTC); and

"Whereas wait times for people who urgently need long-term care and are waiting in hospital have increased by 270% since the Liberal government came into office; and

"Whereas the number of homicides in long-term care being investigated by the coroner are increasing each year; and

"Whereas, over a period of 12 years, the government has consistently ignored recommendations regarding long-term care from provincial oversight bodies such as the Ontario Ombudsman and the Auditor General; and

"Whereas Ontario legislation does not require a minimum staff-to-resident ratio in long-term-care homes, resulting in insufficient staffing and inability for LTC homes to comply with ministry regulations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act in the best interest of Ontarians and conduct a full public inquiry into seniors care with particular attention to the safety of residents and staff; quality of care; funding levels; staffing levels and practices; capacity, availability and accessibility in all regions; the impact of for-profit privatization on care; regulations, enforcement and inspections; and government action and inaction on previous recommendations to improve the long-term-care system."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Katrina.

1530

GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 indicates, 'If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises;' and

"Whereas the Ontario Human Rights Code speaks to the 'duty to accommodate persons with disabilities ... in a manner that most respects the dignity of the person;' and

"Whereas, despite these provisions, many who require, have been medically recommended for and own professional, trained service dogs, including children with autism, PTSD sufferers and others, continue to be denied access to public places; and

"Whereas, in one such case of a Kitchener boy with autism being denied access to have his professional, trained service dog at a Waterloo Catholic District School Board school, an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ruled against specified accommodations for the boy and his dog at school; and

"Whereas Bill 80, the Ontario Service Dog Act, has been introduced at the Ontario Legislature to strictly prohibit 'denying accommodation, services or facilities to an individual or discriminating against an individual with respect to accommodation, services or facilities because the individual is a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service dog'; and

"Whereas service dogs perform a series of vital tasks to support those living with disabilities, including serving in guidance, seizure response, mobility assistance, autism and PTSD support, among other medically acknowledged services; and

"Whereas ongoing denial of access means those requiring service dogs are continuing to face further hurdles beyond the impacts of disability to be allowed the public accommodations they deserve;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Open access to registered service dogs and owners:

"Endorse the legislative requirements of Bill 80, the Ontario Service Dog Act, to end continued discrimination and ensure those requiring service dogs are no longer denied the essential public access they should already be guaranteed."

I agree with this, affix my name to it and hand it to page Olivia.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Annie Chaumont from Skead in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows.

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask my good page Sean to bring it to the Clerk.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have another petition today, and it reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas:

"—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

"—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

"—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

"—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

"—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

"—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

"—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"—To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

"—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response."

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONGER, FAIRER ONTARIO ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2017

LOI DE 2017

POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT
ET PLUS JUSTE
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 20, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / *Projet de loi 177, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe the NDP has the floor.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and represent the views of my constituents, my caucus colleagues and the leader of our party, Andrea Horwath, on this day on Bill 177, the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act. There's an hour of this, so be prepared for an hour of talking about a stronger and fairer Ontario. The Liberals are great at titles, Speaker. They are the ultimate at titles.

Unfortunately, I wasn't in the House when the Minister of Finance did his—I believe he shared his time with member from Etobicoke Centre. I did take the time to read to read the remarks and I'm going to comment on some of them. Actually, I appreciate his remarks. I disagreed with many of them—perhaps most of them. We seriously disagree with the Liberals' budgetary policy, and that's why we will be opposing this bill.

I appreciate where he started his speech. He talked about his riding. He talked about a big change of the government of the day—obviously, it's his job to promote his government's policies: Because they shut down the coal-fired generating plant—I believe it was called the Lakeview coal generating plant—he can now see the lake. That made a big difference in his community, and I can appreciate that. I learned something. That's a government policy. It was before my time here, but I believe that all the parties were in favour of cancelling coal. Certainly ours was, and obviously the Liberals were.

He commented that not only did it make a big change in his local neighbourhood, but the cancellation of coal also made a big change in the air we breathe in Ontario. Later on, I'm going to come back on that: that since Hydro One is now buying coal-fired power generation stations in other countries, they obviously don't really care about the air in other countries. We're going to come back to that in a few minutes. But for the Lakeview Generating Station, that's now a beautiful recreational area—more power to him.

I'm going to follow his example. I'm going to talk about, since I have been here, a Liberal policy that's made a huge difference in my riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane and in many other ridings across the province, but certainly in mine. That was the day that the Liberal government decided to privatize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, and their first step was that they cancelled our passenger train, the Northlander. That was the first thing they decided to do.

What I found interesting in the minister's speech, and I have it written down here somewhere—it will take me a while to find it; I've got two pages of notes. In his speech, he said that the Liberals were very committed to building infrastructure—we'll get back to that later, to the numbers—but he was wondering about the Tories. He

said something like, "What won't they build and what will they cut?" That's a legitimate question. But there's a second part to that question: We already know what the Liberals cut. They didn't have any trouble deciding to cut infrastructure in northern Ontario. They had no trouble at all—none.

1540

At that point, they said—and I remember it so distinctly—that we were going to have enhanced bus service in the north. Do you know what "enhanced" means in Liberal in northern Ontario? It means "less." That's "enhanced." Whenever you hear "modernization," do you know what that means? That means "cut." When you hear "enhanced," that means "less"—

Mr. Michael Harris: They turn the heat off.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. Thank you. I'm going to need a few heckles, because I might run out of steam in about five minutes.

Actually, the first thing they did is, they closed the bus stations.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Well, there were no buses.

Mr. John Vanthof: The member from Barrie just said, "Well, why do we have bus stations if we already cancelled the buses?" Obviously the member from Barrie doesn't care about Ontario north of Barrie. I care about Barrie. I am very proud that northern Ontario is part of Ontario. I think that they should have a fantastic transit system down here, but we also need equitable transit in the rest of the province, and I would never make a shot like that, unprovoked, at your part of the province—never. Thank you for giving me an extra 30 seconds.

But do you know why the bus service wasn't enhanced? Because, although northerners united, with both opposition parties, along with mayors from across the north—united to stop this government from dumping ONTC—they make it so the ONTC passenger division has to be—what's the word I'm looking for? It has to pay its own way.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Revenue-neutral.

Mr. John Vanthof: Revenue-neutral. Thank you. But other public transportation in this province isn't revenue-neutral, so why does public transportation in northern Ontario have to be revenue-neutral? The ONTC is a public corporation. That's the only mandate it has to operate with, Speaker, so they had no choice. They rationalized bus routes. They closed bus stations. They did all of those things.

So when we hear that this government say—and again, I listened to the minister, and I appreciate his position—how this is the biggest infrastructure-spending government in the history of Ontario—and we're going to get back to how much money they actually spend on infrastructure—in the north, it just doesn't ring true, the same as the title of the book, *A Strong and Fair Ontario*.

After 14 years, now their buzzword is "fair," but they've been in power for 14 years. They've been watching as things got less and less and less fair. They've been watching, and now that an election is creeping up again, it's time to get fair. If you'll recall last time, it was "open

and transparent.” That worked out well. That worked out extremely well, Speaker. We’ve had all kinds of issues that obviously weren’t open or transparent, so the “open and transparent” tagline, “a more open and transparent Ontario,” is not going to fly in this election. It’s not going to be the Liberal tagline. It’s going to be “a fairer Ontario.”

Getting back: The minister has no more Lakeview Generating Station. I, the finance critic for the NDP, have no public transportation in my riding, and under the NDP, we would bring that back, because everyone in Ontario, not just in northeastern Ontario—there has to be a transportation strategy so people can get to work, so people can get to school, so people can get to medical appointments.

If you’re in Timiskaming–Cochrane right now—and once again, we are happy and proud to be part of Ontario. We’re proud of Toronto. We’re proud of the CN Tower. We’re proud of Niagara Falls. There are even some of us who are proud of the Maple Leafs—including you, Speaker, I know; I have to keep you onside. But if you’re in my hometown of Englehart, or Temiskaming Shores, or Cochrane, and you need to have a medical appointment, and you don’t drive or you don’t know somebody who has a car, you are—there is an acronym for that, but we’re not going to use it—out of luck. You are—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: I didn’t use the acronym; I just said, “You’re out of luck.” And that shouldn’t be.

To add insult to injury, Speaker, I believe it was last winter that the Premier came to my PC colleague’s riding, came to North Bay. Maybe the member has a better recollection, but she went to Canadore, I believe, or Nipissing, and the students asked her questions. The first question and the hardest question the students asked was, “What about public transportation? We’re students. We come to North Bay.” North Bay is a beautiful city and has a beautiful campus. It’s a beautiful place. But there’s not a lot of public transportation—unless you have a car or fly, but not everybody can afford to fly. So they’re asking about the train, and the answer—again, I can’t quote this; I don’t have the article in front of me. But the Premier’s response was, “Well, the rest of northern Ontario doesn’t have train service, so why should you?” That was her response.

Ms. Cindy Forster: She wouldn’t say that in Toronto, would she?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. But what kind of attitude is that? The right attitude is that you take what you have, as they do in the GTA, and you make it better.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You raise the bar.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you for that. You raise the bar. That’s what you do. You raise the bar. Can you imagine if here we said, “Well, do you know what? Kitchener-Waterloo doesn’t have this, but Hamilton does, so we’re going to take it out of Hamilton because it’s just not fair.” That’s just not how you do things. But the Premier of our province said that in North Bay:

“Well, if they don’t have a train, you obviously shouldn’t have one either.”

What kind of attitude is that? Is that a fairer Ontario, Speaker? It’s not. It’s a government that is governing for themselves and not governing for the province. That is what that is. It should be called “a stronger, fairer our part of Ontario,” and that’s wrong. This has gotten continually worse.

That’s why, if you travel—because of this job, I have the opportunity to travel across this province. This is a fantastic job. Before I got this job, I lived six hours north of here, and I thought—I was a director on Dairy Farmers of Ontario before, so I got to travel all across northern Ontario—that it was just northern Ontario that didn’t like Toronto. But it’s the farther away you get.

But the problem is, now that I live in Toronto six months a year, I have the opportunity—I tell this all the time to my folks at home: Toronto is a great place, but there are huge issues in the GTHA as well, right? It’s not heaven down here either, right? They have—we’ll go to transportation—huge transportation and huge transit issues which have to be addressed. But, again, we need equitable service. That’s just one example.

Miss Monique Taylor: I have ghost trains.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Monique has ghost trains.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, yes, Monique with the ghost stations. I’m going to need lots of heckling here.

I had the opportunity, yesterday and the night before, to attend the Ontario Federation of Agriculture convention. I met great people. I used to be a director there, too. Again, as we talk about a stronger and fairer Ontario, the mayor of French River happened to be there: Claude Bouffard. I was surprised to see him there. He said, “Well, John, do you realize that my OMPF just got cut by another \$70,000?”

We’ve got that jingle, “Good things”—I can’t sing—“grow in Ontario.” Pretty soon, you’re going to have to put, “but we can’t get them off the field because there are no more culverts or bridges.” Because—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It would be a hell of a song.

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Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

But that’s a fact. People in rural Ontario are having—the municipalities are having to close roads because—well, really because the Tories downloaded the roads onto them. Well, they did. I’m not making things up. I was a councillor when it happened. They downloaded the roads. The Liberals say, “Well, we’re going to re-upload.” But they upload some things, but not all.

Small municipalities with lower populations and a lot of rural municipalities—their population is stagnant or declining. But that doesn’t mean their productivity is declining.

Everything in our province is based on population growth. Again, places that have big population growth have huge issues. We spend a lot of time pushing the government on—I don’t remember the name of the hospital—Brampton hospital. Correct me if I’m wrong, but there was, in the last year, 4,200-and-change patients

who were treated in the hallways of Brampton hospital. That is disgraceful. It's a product of an erosion of funding coupled with explosive growth. That's an issue. We're not discounting that. We push for areas with big growth to get them more services. We push like crazy.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. Hospital budgets were frozen for five years.

But in areas where the growth is not going up, they still need services. If you take mining—there were a lot of foresters here this morning; foresters, First Nations, mayors from forestry towns. Their population isn't going up, but their productivity is soaring. There are less people doing the same job, still being the same economic engine. Farming, agriculture is the biggest economic driver in this province. It's the biggest—the most jobs come from the agri-food sector.

I'm going to quote a former president of the federation of agriculture, Don McCabe. I love this line. He says, "It's always in between the auto sector and agriculture, and since you can't eat a car, agriculture is number one."

But because every program is based on population growth, rural municipalities are struggling. Why that's important, Speaker, is that those farm families and the people who serve and help—the hardware stores, the machinery dealers, the grocery stores—they all have families, they all have to go to school, they all have to have health care and they all need to have a decent distance to a hospital. They also need long-term care. They don't want to drive to the city, which they've never been to, to see their parents. So unless we take care of that and treat everyone in this province not equally but equitably, ultimately—well, we're there now. Again, I love the GTHA. I love Ontario. But there are a lot of people in the country—in northern Ontario, in southern Ontario—who truly believe there are two Ontarios. And that, long-term, is a huge problem.

That's something I don't really think the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act really addresses. Yes, there is an announcement for the greenhouse sector—great. The greenhouse sector is—I'm just going to spend a minute on the greenhouse sector. We have pushed for a long time for—you know what? We stand up for what we believe in. Some of the parties don't. Some of the parties kind of hide what they really believe in and don't talk about it. You might not agree with what the NDP stands for, but we have been pushing for a long time for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. People need at least 15 bucks an hour. You know, people will tell me, "Oh, well, that's"—and I say, "Okay, you try living on 15 bucks an hour."

The reality is, and the greenhouse sector is a good example, when you have to compete with other jurisdictions who don't pay those wages, you are at a disadvantage. We're not hiding that either. So what we've been pushing for for a long time is, we want that \$15 an hour, but we have to make sure there is programming in place: realistic, targeted programming that actually buffers the people who really can't compete.

There is no good employer in the province who does not want to pay \$15 an hour or more. I truly believe that. But there are sectors that have a hard time, and they are going to need some kind of buffer. We've been saying that for two years, and for the last two years, minus a few months, we were told by the government, "Oh, this is crazy, impractical, unrealistic." Then they looked at a calendar: "Oh, an election's coming up. Fifteen dollars."

The Conservatives don't have the same view, and they have a right to their view, as we do. One thing I appreciate from the Tories is that at least they have a view on this one. Right? They took a stand on this one. As we go farther, they will take more stands and we'll see where they stand, and that's fine.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, don't call a quorum while I'm talking. I'll break my rhythm.

Obviously, the government is not too interested in what other people want to talk about—a stronger and fairer Ontario—because they've already got all the answers. That's part of the problem. Even in the committee process, when another party proposes something, how much chance is there of getting that done?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Zero.

Mr. John Vanthof: Zero, because they've already got all the answers. But they don't.

I'm going to go back to the minister's remarks. In his remarks, he stated that the NDP insists that everything be state-owned. He stated that in his remarks. Well, although the Liberals like to grow that myth, the NDP is very much in favour of the private sector. We realize what the private sector's job is. On the flip side, we believe that there are certain services that are essential that should be provided by the public sector, and actually, in many cases, the public sector is not only as efficient; it's more efficient and you have control.

A good example, brought up several times by the member from London-Fanshawe: Hydro One. That's a good example. Again, the Conservatives believe—at least the Conservatives back when I used to be a Conservative—that the private sector is always better; the private sector can always do it more efficiently. That's what they believe, and that's their right. That's what they believed when they started the process of selling Ontario Hydro. It was going to be more efficient. "The private sector is always cheaper." You know what, Speaker? Hydro didn't get any cheaper. Every time you put a profit line into an essential service—

Ms. Cindy Forster: The price goes up.

Mr. John Vanthof: It goes up, because that is the role of the private sector. The private sector is out to maximize profit. That's not a sin; that is their role. That's why you invest in companies; that's why you become an entrepreneur. You want to do things for the good of doing them, but if you're in the private sector, you also want to make money doing it. I loved being a dairy farmer, but I didn't want to do it for free. I didn't want to do it at cost either. Right? That's the issue.

In our opinion, essential services should be provided by the public and should be provided at cost. How was the manufacturing sector in Ontario built, Speaker? When we had Ontario Hydro, it was a public entity and it provided power at cost. That was a huge advantage to our manufacturing sector, to our agricultural sector, to our homeowners, to the public sector, to everyone.

The Tories started us down the wrong path to privatizing, and then this open and transparent—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Progressive.

Mr. John Vanthof: Progressive. I forgot “progressive.” This progressive government decided to continue on the same path. They expected a different result by doing the same thing. They put Hydro One on the auction block.

1600

I still can't get over this one. They put Hydro One on the auction block and they said—again, I've got this in a note somewhere—that they were going to sell 60% of Hydro One, but they were still going to maintain control. Are you with me yet, Speaker? They were going to sell 60%, but they were going to maintain control. We asked how. They said, “Well, we'll have the biggest stake. We've got a 40% stake. So, of course, we're the biggest shareholder. We're going to maintain control.”

I strictly remember grade 1. I started school in grade 1. When you have 10 kids on the playground, the team with six usually wins. It's not rocket science. But hey, I'm just a farmer, so I thought, “Maybe there's something in all these rules and regulations. Maybe there's something in there that prevents that.”

That leads me to the next question: If that is the case, when the privatized Hydro One decided to either merge or purchase—what's that company called?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Avista.

Mr. John Vanthof: Avista, an energy company in the States with a huge coal-fired component.

So now Hydro One is once again in coal-fired energy, although in another country. Did the province of Ontario get outmanoeuvred at the board table, or are they in favour of coal-power generation—just not at Lakeview station, because the Minister of Finance doesn't want to lose his view? That's a legitimate question.

Often while we express our views, we are all—guilty is the wrong word, but it is our job to do the best job we can expressing our viewpoint counter to the viewpoints of others. That's our job, right? But it's a legitimate question to ask, really. What went down there when you guys bought a coal-fired power plant really? What went down there? And what good did that do for the people of Ontario, really? Because when you lose control of a public entity, you lose control of the good you can do for the people of Ontario.

Also, if you take an entity like Hydro One—Hydro One actually was profitable. They actually weren't providing power at cost; they were making a profit for the province. I believe in 2014-15, it was \$1.679 billion. Hydro One and OPG together, combined, made a profit of \$1.679 billion; money that could go to schools, money

that could go to hospital beds, money that could go to all kinds of great things for the people of Ontario.

But then they sell 60%. Now we don't even own 60%; we own less than 60%. We own 37-point—when we merged, we owned 40% and when we merged with Avista, it went down. So we don't own 40% anymore.

But this year, in this beautiful book on page 127, the estimate for 2017-18 is \$617 million or \$619 million. So basically two thirds of our profit that we could have used for schools, for hospital beds, is gone.

Now, again, I'm just a farmer, okay? And the member from Kitchener-Waterloo wonders why I always have to put farms in my speech. I'm just a farmer, but there's a saying in farming: When you have to start selling the cows to pay for the feed bill, that's the beginning of the end. When you're a province and you have to start selling your profit-generating public entities, there's a problem.

The member from London-Fanshawe brings up a good point about balancing the budget. The Conservatives are very vocal on this. I believe I've heard them say that the Liberals have “cooked the books.” I'm not saying that. That's an oversimplification. What the Liberals are doing, from a management perspective—if it was a business, it's extremely bad management, because what they're doing is selling income-producing hard assets to balance their operating budget. That's what they're doing. In business, if I did that, my bank manager would call me into the branch and I would have to make some big changes. The people of Ontario should call the Liberals into the ballot box and make some big changes, because that is wrong and we're going to pay for it.

The Liberals are going to say, “Oh, no, no. You're wrong. We didn't do this and the other things. We are not doing this to balance the budget. You're all wrong. We're doing this to build infrastructure.” Remember their claim? They are the biggest infrastructure spenders, with the biggest spending on infrastructure in the history of the province of Ontario. That's what they're going to say. But in reality—and I'm going to have to find my note for this because these are great numbers—since Premier Wynne has been elected, they're underspending on infrastructure. They're actually spending less than they're budgeting. In 2016-17, they underspent by \$3 billion.

Interjection: Three billion dollars?

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, it's good they're not spending, but it's not good when you say you're spending on infrastructure and you're not.

In the budget, the Minister of Finance talked about opportunity costs, that every dollar you spend brings back, I think it is, \$6 or something. Well, every dollar you don't spend on infrastructure, you lose that. Actually, if you take the last four years of Premier McGuinty and the four years of the current Premier, the current Premier and her Liberal government—the biggest infrastructure spending government in history—have spent \$4 billion less than Premier McGuinty. But in the next 13 years, counting when they got elected, they are going to spend \$190 billion. They're not spending it now, but after they get elected—oh, watch out.

You know what? I'm going to use another farming quote, and some people here might not get it. I heard it a couple of days ago again, and I haven't heard this one for years. I was at the Empire Club listening to Premier Notley, and she used it. I was at a table with a lot of people and I was the only one who got this quote. When your talk is a lot bigger than what you're actually doing, in ranch circles that's called "big hat and no cattle." That's what we've got here: big hat—really talking about spending all the money on infrastructure—but no cattle because they're selling off the cattle, like Hydro One, to balance their budget.

Why are they balancing their budget? Because they made an election promise four years ago to balance their budget. Again, anyone in business knows that you're better off to keep your profit-, income-generating assets, and certainly ones you need to control to ensure that you actually have access to these assets. You're better off keeping those assets and actually recognizing that you're going to have a deficit than you are selling things that you need to keep just to artificially balance your books. Anyone in business will tell you that. You can't run a province like a business, but certain principles are the same. That's what's so aggravating about the sale of Hydro One.

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Ms. Catherine Fife: So unnecessary.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

We're going to looking at the bigger picture. In the last election, the Liberals won a majority. That's the way our system works. They have a mandate to govern. But no one was thinking about selling Hydro One in the last election. You would expect that from the Conservatives. I'm not slamming the Conservatives. The Conservatives believe in privatization. You would expect them to want to sell Hydro One.

The one thing that you've got to grant Conservatives: At least they tell you when they're going to make a mistake.

Interjection: Not these ones.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, well, these ones don't say much. They've been pretty quiet. In the last couple of elections, they've said what they were going to do, and people didn't like it, so this time—I'm sure there are some people on those benches who would much rather just stand up and say, "We believe in this" and "We believe in that," but they're being told, "Keep it quiet, because we're the new, friendly Conservatives." I have a lot of Conservatives in my family who are pretty upset, because they want to know what they're voting for. The Conservatives are having a convention this weekend, so maybe they'll find out this weekend what they're planning to vote for.

They didn't expect it from the Liberals. They really didn't expect it.

Quite frankly, I really don't know why they did it, because they could have done what they're doing without selling Hydro One.

That's why we've committed, when we're elected, to start the process to bring Hydro One back in public hands, so the decisions made by the board of Hydro One will actually be for the benefit of the people of Ontario, not for private investors.

We don't blame the investors who have bought into Hydro One. It's a good investment. That's why it was saleable. But the government should have never, ever gone there.

I'm going to just talk about the bill for a second. I'm getting these notes here. We are talking about the bill.

Interjection: Finally.

Mr. John Vanthof: I heard a heckle: "Finally." Well, actually, every comment that I made was responding to the Minister of Finance in his speech. On our side, we didn't say, "Finally." We actually listen to other people most of the time—not all the time. I made sure everything that I have said up to this point is in response to the Minister of Finance. I'm doing your job for you, Speaker; I'm self-regulating.

We had our technical briefing yesterday. It was two hours, and my head is still spinning a bit. One of the things that I found very egregious—this is a budget bill. We don't agree with the Liberals' budgetary agenda. We never agree with the Liberals' budgetary agenda. We wouldn't sell Hydro One. We wouldn't have people in hallways in hospitals. We wouldn't close trains. We don't agree with their budgetary agenda. But they have things in this bill that are long, long overdue and that should be on bills by themselves because they deserve not only a debate—a wholesome recognition. One of those—perhaps the most egregious—the trust fund for Grassy Narrows is in this bill. It should be its own bill. We picked out other ones. There are four or five other bills that have come forward in this legislative session that are equally—not exactly the same, but are—like the every family is equal act. Again, that was a very important bill. That bill was presented by itself. It was one subject. You could vote against the bill, but you would vote on conscience for that bill.

The trust fund for Grassy Narrows for the mercury poisoning that those people have suffered for decades and decades and decades should not be hidden in a budgetary schedule. I'm saying that now because I want to make it very, very clear that this is on the record—that at some point, if someone in the Liberal government says, "Oh, but you voted against the trust fund for Grassy Narrows," I want to make it very clear that we are voting against the budgetary measures of the Liberal government. But that part of the bill is long, long, long overdue. We hope with all our hearts, now that the money will be provided, that the work actually goes ahead. And we're still consulting with First Nations on what their views are. So far it has been positive. There is First Nations participation on the directors of the trust fund, as well as the minister. That's a good thing. But that shouldn't be in a budgetary bill.

Another one is the French university. The Franco-Ontarian community has been fighting for that for years.

This government has been in power for 14 years. They could have done it years ago. For them to make the commitment six months before the election and then put it in a budgetary bill—because how many times—and someday I’m going to have a search done. When we ask a question of the government, whether it be on hospital overcrowding or fair workplaces or strikes, it will be, “Well, you voted against the budget.” Well, yes; we totally disagree with their financial policies. Sometimes I feel they do it on purpose.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: John, say it isn’t so.

Mr. John Vanthof: I wish it wasn’t.

Do you know what? Our system would be so much better if we actually grouped things together and did bills that made sense. Grassy Narrows should be by itself—I would agree with the member from London—Fanshawe—like the cannabis bill.

Putting cannabis and school buses together—does that make sense, really, from a legislative policy point? No.

We know what it’s about. You’re trying to wedge. But are you doing any service to the people of Ontario? No. What you’re doing is, you’re trying to do some service for the Liberal Party by doing wedge issues and trying to divide people—and so you’ll have the ability.

I sincerely hope that this government doesn’t sink to the level of saying, “Oh, but you voted against giving the people in Grassy Narrows a chance to clean up that mercury contamination.” That’s why I’m putting this on the record right up front.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Because we’re the ones who have been calling for it for years.

Mr. John Vanthof: That’s right. We’ve been pushing for it like crazy.

1620

Earlier on, we put forward a reasoned amendment regarding schedule 33, pension benefits. We also believe that that part of the bill should be pulled out and should be debated separately. During the technical briefing, we spent quite a bit of time on pension benefits. Before I go much further, I would like to thank the staff at the various ministries, because they stayed there as long as we wanted and they tried to answer our questions. But in the pension benefits part they couldn’t, because the information on how the pension benefits regime in Ontario is going to change with this bill isn’t included in the bill. It’s in the press statement from the Minister of Finance. So they couldn’t really be definite on how the bill was actually going to change the pension benefits.

For the future of people in Ontario—and think about all the pension problems we’ve had with Sears. There are all kinds of pension issues. You know what? We should take some time and do this right, right? After this, if it was pulled out, we might very well disagree with what the government is doing, but right now, nobody really knows what the government is doing—really. Again, that’s something that shouldn’t be just rolled in.

I certainly don’t claim to be a pension expert, but they’re talking about taking the solvency rate from 100% down to 85%, right? That’s not good.

And then they’re talking about making the bill so that they can create buffers to fix that. But they don’t really know what the buffers are because that’s in the minister’s press release. Come on. Really?

Again, do your due diligence and make legislation work. The way they’re doing it, it’s just not, at this point, the budget measures—there are a few things in here that they are trying to clean up. I don’t disagree with everything in here, but a lot of this stuff should be broken up and should be done in much more detail. They leave a lot—specifically the pension stuff—up to a lot of regulation.

I’m not going to quote but I’ll paraphrase my colleague from Timmins—James Bay. He has waxed eloquently about how it used to be that government, that the Legislature, worked on—a lot more of the meat of legislation was left up to the legislators, and now it’s all delegated to the ministers and the ministries.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: To regulations.

Mr. John Vanthof: That’s right. To regulations.

In a way, this is a good example of that because, again, in the technical briefing, when our researcher was asking the questions, “What would this do?” and “How would this work?” they really couldn’t answer the questions except by pointing to the minister’s press release. I have been here long enough to know that what’s in the press release and what’s in the legislation or what’s in the regulations isn’t always the same.

That brings me to another subject, one that I haven’t touched yet and one that I’m still trying to get over. We worked last weekend—well, we work every weekend in our ridings, but last weekend we worked here. This is the first time I have ever in my six years—I have been here since 2011; I’ve never been through this process before.

On the Thursday, the government brought forward a unanimous consent motion that basically everybody agrees—and they wanted to pass back-to-work legislation, sight unseen, in 10 minutes. And the Conservatives wanted to do the same thing. They were pretty aggressive at us. What I couldn’t believe—and, regardless, we’re very opposed to back-to-work legislation. But I’m more concerned about the Conservatives. Haven’t they learned anything in 14 years? They were willing to pass it, sight unseen. The Conservatives are big on back-to-work legislation, obviously, but we hadn’t seen the bill when the unanimous consent motion was put forward to pass this thing in 10 minutes, sight unseen. Several of the Conservative members flipped out on us that we weren’t doing this. They were willing to pass Liberal legislation. Those two words together should be a big red flag. I could not believe it. Would you do that for any other bill? No, especially when you’ve got a government who has a majority. Oh, we had to sit during the weekend? Tough. Really, it didn’t make any difference at the end of the day. Where the difference was for the college students was that the Premier could have stepped in much earlier, not with back-to-work legislation. She has the power to direct the parties back to the table. She could have stepped in much sooner.

What this whole issue is really about is how willing the government was to play politics with this issue—at the very end, at the last minute—to try and blame it on the NDP. Now, we expect that from this government. We expect that. But if you really think about it, how gullible were the Conservatives to jump on the train? They seemed to be so intent on back-to-work legislation, they didn't care what the details said.

Miss Monique Taylor: They were excited they got to be Conservatives again.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's true. But that's something—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Leave him. He's on a roll.

Mr. John Vanthof: Actually, I'm running out so I need some material.

But to me, that was really shocking. That Thursday evening was politics at its worst. Regardless of the bill, regardless of the issue, when two parties get together to orchestrate, to ram any kind of legislation through the House, sight unseen, that is truly frightening for the democratic process. Especially when both parties knew that if we sat on the weekend, it wouldn't make any difference to the process because the government has a majority. Under our system, the government could do basically, within reason, hopefully, anything it wants—and even without reason. If they did things within reason, they wouldn't have sold Hydro One.

I'm going to come back to something that is not in the document, but it was mentioned in the minister's speech and it's mentioned in this. It's a hard subject for me. We have people coming into our office—and I'm sure we all have family members, because I have some in my family—who suffer severe mental health issues. Again, I don't have experience down here with what the services are. I'm sure my urban colleagues could do a much better job, and they will have the chance to say, provided the government doesn't do time allocation on this bill. But I know, in our part of the world, there is very little mental health support—very little. In many cases, addiction and mental health work together, or work against each other. If you talk to the local police services, the local paramedics, the fire services, they're often on the front lines, but they're not equipped either.

1630

Ms. Cindy Forster: Police.

Mr. John Vanthof: Police. If you talk to police officers, they spend hours and hours in the emergency ward. The emergency ward is not equipped to deal with mental health issues either, Speaker.

To the government's credit, I think they recognize that issue. They talk about it. It's a hard issue to tackle because it's not a concrete issue. It's not, "That road is closed, so we'll build a new bridge." It's not like that. But it's something that we have to tackle equitably.

I've had people in my office and I've had their parents in my office—and I've had people in my office and then have had them take their own lives.

How are we going to do this? One of the things we've proposed is to create a separate ministry, solely dedicated to mental health, so it doesn't get relegated.

I don't think anyone in the current health sector is purposely trying to not deal with it. They're not equipped to deal with it. For a lot of our issues with drug addiction, there's an underlying problem, and we have to deal with that. Am I the expert on how to do it? No.

In my riding—and I'm assuming in the rest of the north, and I'm assuming in the rest of rural Ontario—I don't know where to send these people. I can get someone into an addiction program, and then you can get them dry, and when they get out, there's—

Ms. Cindy Forster: No follow-up.

Mr. John Vanthof: There's nothing. That is incredibly frustrating. I'm sure we've all dealt with it.

In my last couple of minutes—actually, about 10 minutes ago I didn't think I was going to get through this.

We haven't talked about the bridge in Nipigon for a while. Do you remember the bridge in Nipigon designed by a company in Spain? I'm bringing this up because there is something in the condensed version here that the government is now going to try to source one third of their procurements locally—it might be a bit bigger. They should think about sourcing their big projects locally as well.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: P3s cost us money.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, P3s do cost us money.

We have lots of expertise in this country. We have lots of expertise with our particular conditions, cold weather. There's a reason why there weren't suspension bridges in Canada before that one. Cables contract when it gets cold. Who knew?

Ms. Cindy Forster: You would have thought the engineer would have known.

Mr. John Vanthof: Did you see the pictures? When you saw the pictures and you saw the one end of the bridge that was all stuck up—and they had to get this bridge open. I remember watching the news where the guy said, "The detour is going to be 11 hours." So they had to get this bridge open. So then the northern Ontario engineering kicked in. They got a bunch of great big cement blocks and weighed the bridge back down. I bet if you went close, they even had some come-alongs pulling it down. We know how to deal with the conditions that we deal with every day.

Sure, we have to take care of our own, but we really don't know what our neighbours within our own province are dealing with. Now, at home, there's lots of snow; here there's none. It's been cold at home. I've already got lots of troubles with roads, got troubles with contractors. I've got troubles with people who have a contract, have three plows sitting there, and the contract isn't signed off. The snow is falling, and they can't go on the roads. To his credit, the minister is looking into it. I give credit where credit is due. The minister is looking into it, and that's a good thing.

We have to learn the things we face. We have to learn the conditions in Barrie, the conditions in Niagara, the

conditions in Timiskaming, and people in the country have to understand how Toronto works. Until we can do that, we're always going to have trouble, and we're still going to vote against this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a privilege to be able to speak to the fall economic statement in response to my colleague from the NDP caucus. I have to say that I have had the privilege of working with him on the Board of Internal Economy. I know him to be a thoughtful, honourable member of the Legislature. That's why I'm pleased to be able to respond to him, but also a little bit disappointed—just a little bit disappointed—in what I heard.

I can't respond to it all in two minutes, but there are a couple of things. One is that the member talked about the fact that there's a number of things in the legislation, that the fall economic statement covers a number of different areas that are distinct from each other, different from each other, and we should separate them all out.

The challenge is that every morning in question period, I hear from the opposition—from the NDP, from the PC caucus—about the various things that they believe we should be acting on and working on, and how we're not doing it fast enough. Well, the only way to do that with the legislative process that we have in place is to group things in legislation. That's how we get work done. I got elected to get work done on behalf of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre. If we want to get work done, if we want to address all of those issues that the opposition and the government members care about in our communities, we sometimes need to group things. That's why that is being done.

The second thing is, he talked about the north at the beginning of his remarks. There are a number of things I just wanted to cite that we're doing for the north: in the fair hydro plan, an additional \$100 million to expand access to natural gas; \$222 million for Ontario's First Nations Health Action Plan; a new \$20 million in the Rural and Northern Education Fund; a basic income pilot in Thunder Bay supporting First Nations in the Ring of Fire—I was there for an announcement with the Premier in August; \$310 million for broadband. So there's lots we're doing for the north. There is lots we're doing for all ridings—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to bring remarks on the comments made by the finance critic from the NDP, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, on the fall economic folly—the fall economic statement—that the Liberals brought forward here: Bill 177, the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act.

As the member from across the way just said, there are a lot of items in this bill that we as PCs would support. For some of them, though, it's reannouncement after reannouncement after reannouncement.

It has been almost four years now since the \$100 million for natural gas expansion was announced. It was actually just prior to the election campaign in 2014 that the Liberals announced that natural gas expansion, and here we are four years later—nearly four years later—announcing the same thing in their fall economic statement.

The Ring of Fire—my goodness. I have been here for six years now, and we have been talking about that for six years.

So while there are some items in this bill that we certainly support as members of the PCs, and we have actually been pushing the government to get shovels in the ground, start acting, start getting things done, here we are announcing them again, in a document that's supposed to make it seem like they are doing something when they haven't done anything for four years.

While we agree with some of those 46 schedules that they have put into the bill, we cannot—we just simply cannot—agree with any of the financial news that's in this bill, because we can't trust any of the Liberals' numbers, and the independent officers of the Legislature are telling us that we can't. It's not me saying that we can't; it's the Auditor General saying we can't trust their numbers.

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Mr. Robert Bailey: The FAO.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's the Financial Accountability Officer, the budget watchdog, saying that we can't believe their numbers. We just can't support this because we can't believe their numbers, Mr. Speaker, and that's a big problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, on his one-hour lead on the budget bill. He says that I don't really appreciate the farming analogy, the farming stories that he sort of injects. It's just not true. I have to say, I think his analogy of selling the cows to buy the feed is very apt and very much connected to the sell-off of Hydro One, in that you sell off a revenue-generating asset to so-called “invest” in infrastructure when, on the other side of the books, the infrastructure investment has never been realized.

We have public accounts. We have the \$3.3 billion that was not spent in 2016-17, although it was budgeted for. Then we also have the \$8.8 billion which was unspent from 2013-14 to 2016-17. In the first four years of this Premier's oversight of this province, she actually spent \$4 billion less than her predecessor, Premier McGuinty. That is the Liberal myth: that you had to sell Hydro One to invest in infrastructure, when the numbers tell a very different story.

So selling the cows to buy the feed is very apt, and it is very different from Shirley Fife saying, “Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?” I just want to get that on the record there.

Laughter.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I also want to say, on his point around the gas plants and getting rid of the greenhouse emissions, this is a government that, under Hydro One, has purchased the Colstrip coal plant in eastern Montana. It is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. We now are the proud owners of an 800-acre coal ash waste pond—a toxic soup. Greenhouse gas emissions do not stay in Montana. I think the member made this point very well; he did an excellent job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: At this point, I am proud to stand up and speak on behalf of Bill 177, a Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act. I'm going to take a different approach. As a teacher, I know that when French was first introduced to the public schools in Ontario, it was not widely accepted. There were many parents who had their children withdraw and did not want their children to learn French. The good news is that the French program is very, very popular now. People realize that it's important that children are raised knowing more than one language—hopefully more than two or three.

This is a truly historic moment for Franco-Ontarians, as several key initiatives that we have been working on over the past year are coming to fruition. Our government has worked in true partnership with the Franco-Ontarian community. I know that the people in Lafontaine, Perkinsfield, Penetang and up my way are very thrilled with these initiatives. This government is introducing legislation that will recognize Ottawa as a bilingual city; transfer the governance of the Centre Jules-Léger, a provincial school, to the 12 francophone school boards of the province; and create a French-language university in Toronto.

Ontario is home to well over 600,000 francophones, the largest population in Canada outside of Quebec. Our government recognizes the educational needs of la francophonie in Ontario and to promote fairness, choice and opportunity in post-secondary education.

We know that the French public education system is a major pillar in our publicly funded education system. It provides unique supports in French for students who may be deaf or hard of hearing, or those with severe learning disabilities, through an extensive consultation process. We heard the francophone community express a desire to manage and operate Centre Jules-Léger.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. We return to the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane for his reply.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to thank all of the members who took some time to comment on my speech.

In reply to the member from Etobicoke Centre, we appreciate that you need to get work done; that's your mandate. But a good example is that after the hell that the people of Grassy Narrows have been through, that should be a stand-alone bill. That isn't just a schedule in a catch-all budget bill, because that might happen again somewhere else to someone else. That should be a stand-alone. Those people should at least have the decency so that

they could come here or we could go there and actually talk about that bill. That's two different things. It's money, but it's not just a simple budgetary thing.

Member from Prince Edward—Hastings: I couldn't agree more. The people in rural Ontario—this natural gas expansion has been announced to death already. Put it out there. The election is coming, so I'm sure there are going to be a couple of shovels in the ground, but you knew this four years ago. Think of the opportunity costs we've been missing because you guys have been holding this back so you could make an election announcement.

Member from Kitchener—Waterloo: I don't think I'll be able to use your analogy, but you're welcome to use mine.

Member from Barrie: I agree. When we moved to northern Ontario, my parents tried to put me in a French school and we were rejected. I can understand French, but I've always been at a disadvantage in northern Ontario because I'll never be fully bilingual. So anything we can do to make everyone have a full appreciation of French, I'm with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm pleased to be able to rise for the next hour and have a discussion about Bill 177.

Speaker, this fall economic statement is nothing more than a pre-election house of cards. As we dug deeper into the numbers, it was clear that the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer were absolutely correct not to believe any of the numbers in this book.

By the government's own admission, the economy will underperform many private sector forecasts for 2017, which had growth at 3% or higher. Despite the government's narrative, it doesn't line up with the fact that growth is slowing as we speak. Yet they're still somehow predicting a \$10-billion revenue increase this year alone so they can balance the budget. None of this adds up.

We wonder: Why do the Liberals continue to thumb their nose at the Legislature's independent experts, who say the budget is not balanced? The experts have been clear that the government has been using one-time revenue to fluff up their budget: money from the Hydro One sale—well, that's over now; money from the land transfer tax—the housing market is cooling; from federal transfers—well, that fluctuates year to year. Those are, all together, in the billions of dollars. In fact, each of them alone is in the billions.

Without these massive one-time revenues, the government still says annual revenue growth will be 4% over the next four years, but the Financial Accountability Office says that it will average just 3%. It doesn't sound like much. However, the difference between 3% and 4% in a budget of this size is billions of dollars. We're billions of dollars apart from where the Financial Accountability Office says we should be.

Again, Speaker, none of this adds up. If the independent legislative experts don't believe the government's numbers, why should Ontario's families? Why should we ever believe any of the numbers we get from the Liberals?

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By almost every metric, this government has underperformed since the 2017 budget. Actually, revenues are only up \$115 million—nowhere close to their forecast. Yet expenses are up \$215 million since the budget. Personal income tax and health premium revenue is down. It's down almost \$2 billion since the budget came out last spring. Yet, they still say revenue is going to increase somehow by \$10 billion. It's a made-up number to artificially balance the budget.

We have these rosy, glowing projections from the government, but in reality, the numbers just aren't there. The truth doesn't fit with the government's narrative. You have to continue to ask: Why does it always take the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or the OPP to get to the truth in the province of Ontario?

Speaker, reading this book, the fall economic statement, is like reading a fairy tale. I have to say that to you, Speaker, because everything inside it is made-up stories. It's just wonderful little made-up fairy-tale stories. If you look in the financial section, they don't use the Financial Accountability Officer's numbers as a starting point. They don't use the Auditor General's numbers as a starting point. They use their own made-up numbers to start and then fluff up the books to show a balance and a surplus at the end. It's a fairy tale. It makes for wonderful reading for Liberals, I'm sure. But somehow, we have got to be able to start dealing with facts in Ontario.

I'm going to talk about four words that are very, very serious words from the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, and the Auditor General, the AG. Speaker, they are "unlikely assumptions," and "significantly misstated." Those are quotes from the AG and the FAO. When you look last month, there were two reports. One was called "blistering" and the other was called "scathing." That's by just about every media in Ontario. So when you look at the Financial Accountability Officer's commentary, the title of the commentary, Ontario's Debt Reduction Commitment Based on Unlikely Assumptions—that's the title—that says it all. That should just tell you everything you need to know. Unlikely assumptions: The numbers that they have put in here are not going to happen. They're unlikely. They have made assumptions here that are just not going to happen.

The Financial Accountability Officer predicts our net debt will increase by \$76 billion over the next five years. That brings us up to \$392 billion in debt, Speaker. Remember: When this government took over, it was in the \$139-billion range. Well, today, it's \$392 billion. It will be over \$250 billion—almost three times what it was when they took office. That's very significant. It took 137 years to get it to \$139 billion, and they have tripled it in 15 years. Well, it will be more years by the time it's tripled.

They're also going to raise the net debt rate to GDP—it's a complicated expression—but it's going to be raised to 40.3%. It talks about how much debt that you have, your net debt to GDP, to your growth in your province. What you really just need to know is that it used to be

27%. When this government took office, it was a healthy 27%. Why I tell you that was healthy is because even this government continues to tell you that their goal is to get it back to the pre-Liberal number of 27%. But right now, it's on its way to 40.3%. That's alarming.

The targets that this government is using and announcing are based on achieving a balanced budget every year for the next 12 years. That's why the Financial Accountability Officer said that's an unlikely assumption; that's not going to happen. It has never happened before and it's not going to happen again, so why would you tell people that that's what we're basing this on?

Here's a quote from the FAO. He says, "If any of these relatively optimistic assumptions fall short ... the government's 27% debt-to-GDP target would not be achieved." They go on to say that achievement of that 27% target is based on "unlikely assumptions." Again, the FAO said, "Over the past 30 years, Ontario has rarely achieved successive ... balanced budgets," let alone 12 consecutive balanced budgets, especially from these guys. So his final words are "unlikely assumptions."

Now let's jump to the Auditor General for a moment. The title of the Auditor General's report is equally blistering as the FAO's report. Her report was called "Ontario Government Understates Annual Deficit and Net Debt." That's the title of her book: "Ontario Government Understates Annual Deficit and Net Debt." That paints quite a picture. Just the title alone paints quite a picture.

She, for the second year in a row—which is unprecedented in Ontario's storied history—issued what's called a qualified opinion, a qualified audit opinion. What is a qualified opinion? You can only issue a qualified opinion if, "based on the audit evidence obtained, the statements are significantly misstated." That is very, very serious in accounting terms. You're misstating numbers. You know what that means. It would be unparliamentary for me to take it even a step further than that.

This is what she has done. The Auditor General has told us those other two words. Remember the Financial Accountability Officer's "unlikely assumptions"? The Auditor General: "significantly misstated." Boy, I'll tell you, given those four words together, any of those two phrases together, if you were a private company, you would have the regulators in here looking at your books from top to bottom. And we have our regulator; we have one. It's called the Auditor General. But they disparage the Auditor General at every turn.

When you imagine she has told us—again, this fall economic statement has numbers in it, and this is a quote: "The statements significantly understated the 2016-17 deficit, as well as the province's net debt." Speaker, she's telling you the numbers in here aren't right. The Financial Accountability Officer told us the numbers here aren't right. Why would anybody ever believe for a moment anything that's said in this book?

The auditor went on to describe a little bit—this is so serious—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Barrie.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I believe the word “misstated” means “lied.” I believe that should be withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe the “I” word wasn’t used. “Misstated” is probably a softer interpretation. I rule that it’s okay to go.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, that “significantly misstated” has been presented on the floor of this Legislature. It has been tabled by the Auditor General of the province of Ontario. That’s in her book. Anybody can open the Auditor General’s book, tabled right here; it’s in the books that are tabled here.

Here’s what she’s saying: “I have issued a qualified”—remember, “qualified” means that it’s significantly misstated. “I have issued a qualified audit opinion because the statements were not prepared following Canadian public sector accounting standards.” The Auditor General has warned all of us, “The Legislature and all Ontarians must be able to rely on the province’s consolidated financial statements to fairly report the fiscal results for the year. This year they cannot do so.”

Can you imagine what would happen to a company’s stock if their auditors came out and said, “You cannot rely on any of the numbers that are in that report”? That’s what the auditor has told us again.

She went on to say: “The deficit”—now she’s getting specific, Speaker—“is understated by \$1.444 billion”—that’s just this year’s deficit—“and the net debt is understated by \$12.429 billion,” \$12.5 billion for both 2016 and 2017.

That is unbelievable. Again, if you were a company, your stock would be gone. You would have a run on the stock. The regulators would be in there and they’d be looking at the seriousness of what you’ve done.

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So really, what’s at issue are two things. We’ve got the earlier track, which is all about the pension fund surpluses. This government thinks that they can raid the pension funds and use the pension surpluses as their money to fluff up their books. If you can imagine, you’ve got a set of numbers and now you’ve got two tracks of numbers. The Financial Accountability Officer felt it important to report one set of numbers that they believe are correct, and another set of numbers. Can you imagine, Speaker, that they’ve actually printed this little chart out to show that they’ve had to branch off into two sets of numbers, because they’re so far apart between what the Financial Accountability Officer says is correct and the Liberal Party? Now it jumps to get even more complicated, because each of those two branches now have two branches of their own. Now we’ve got this tentacle, this web.

Accounting should be a straight line, up and down. There’s no ifs, ands or buts. Two plus two equals four, end of story. But in this government, you’ve got a two-branch, and each of those now has two. And what those two branches are all about is the treatment of the so-called fair hydro plan.

Here’s what the Auditor General said as to why we have to take two more branches now. The government “inappropriately” recorded “the market account assets ... of the Independent Electricity System Operator.” Oops. It was done inappropriately, but it was also done by design, Speaker. It was not an accident. I’m going to get to another report in a moment that talks about just how nefarious this was. It was done by design. Again, she is saying that the books are significantly misstated.

We can break that down a little bit more, Speaker, and get into the Auditor General’s next report—this is a month later now. What the Auditor General revealed is that the government created a complicated financing structure, designed to keep the true cost of the so-called fair hydro plan off the province’s books. It was going to cost a lot of money, and they didn’t want anybody to know (a) how much money it was going to cost, and (b) how they were paying for it. All they wanted to do was make sure it didn’t show up on their books so that they could have this fake balanced budget, this fluffed-up number.

Their plan was to keep the numbers off the books so as not to show a deficit and not to show increased debt. And they didn’t want to show that this decision would cost Ontario families \$4 billion more in interest costs, as this off-book structure that they built doesn’t have the same borrowing power as the province.

So you can imagine, Speaker, they wanted to hide the fact that this thing was going to cost about \$40 billion to do. They wanted to take that money and shuffle it right across the street over to OPG, Ontario Power Generation, which the people also own and they have their thumb on, and they forced them—they forced them, they co-opted them—into doing this. I’m quite sure the people at OPG had no intention of ever saying, “I’ve got a great idea. Let’s take all this debt on and not tell anybody.” This is a typical Liberal move. Not only have they gone across the street and co-opted OPG into doing this; we then learn that because OPG can’t borrow money at the same low rate that the province does, it’s going to cost \$4 billion more just in interest, to hide that from our books.

But now we say to you: The Auditor General has outed you. Your secret is out there. We now know what you were going to do. You don’t have to do this anymore. She’s going to make you record those loans on the province’s books. You’re going to do that anyway. So why go through with your charade of trying to hide it and pay \$4 billion more? It’s just being stubborn to go through with that charade and put families \$4 billion more into debt. How is that strong and fair for Ontario? How is it fair to make families pay \$4 billion more now, absolutely unnecessarily? Your secret is out. It has been blown. Everybody has figured this one out. You got caught again. And now you have a chance to save 4 billion bucks. Are you going to do it? No, you’re not going to do it.

In the auditor’s summary of concerns, she said, “It is clear ... that the government’s intention in creating the accounting/financing design to handle the costs of the

electricity rate reduction was to avoid affecting its fiscal plan ... the intention was to avoid showing a deficit in the province's budgets and consolidated financial statements ... and to likewise show no increase in the provincial net debt."

That's just plain sneaky. You want a pat on the back for doing something—this so-called fair hydro plan, when there's nothing fair about it at all to the next generation and the one after that and likely the one after that, who will now have the bill for all of this, and a highly inflated bill. The Financial Accountability Office told us that that bill may be—because we're in deficit and we don't have that money in the bank to pay this, we've got to borrow. It could add another \$93 billion. That's the number from the FAO. Think about it.

Earlier, I mentioned that our new debt number in Ontario was going to be \$392 billion. Let's call it \$400 billion, to round it off. This \$93 billion over the next several years—let's call that \$100 billion, to round it off. Add the two together. That's half a trillion dollars, \$500 billion. A billion is a thousand million. So think about a trillion. These are numbers that boggle the mind of everybody here. Just think of the length of paper we're going to need to write \$1 trillion out with those zeros. Each of those zeros represents yet another generation that will be in debt. That's the legacy of Kathleen Wynne. That's the legacy of the Liberal government.

Can you imagine: When they took office, \$139 billion—and today, when they leave, it will be headed towards—because of what they have done, it could be almost half a trillion dollars. That is the legacy of the Liberals.

How they're doing this is very, very sneaky. The Auditor General has told us, "The government is making up its own accounting rules." I'll explain exactly what she is referring to here.

The government is saying that the accounting cannot affect the fiscal plan. That's what they want, and they've got everybody co-opted. As she says, this was a mandate to senior officials and private sector external advisers.

In fact, they paid external advisers \$2 million since last March to concoct this scheme. If this thing was so clean, why didn't they just come out and ask the Auditor General how to do it? She would have told them how—or the fact that they can't do it. No. They spent half a million dollars in a legal retainer and \$2 million in consultant fees. The accounting treatment—she said that she did not want it to "affect the fiscal plan," and that "it should not show any deficit incurred from this required borrowing, nor should it add to the amount the government would report" on their debt. They're trying to hide everything.

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In the end—this is another quote from the Auditor General—"the government decided on a very complex form"—to achieve the mandate—"to avoid recording a ... deficit and an ... increase in ... debt." That's what these guys did. That's what they did. They wanted to make sure that when it came time to put this book out, they

could fluff up the numbers and not have any inconvenient truths happen—the fact that they have \$12.5 billion more in debt to be added, and \$1.5 billion more in deficit.

To end on this chapter: Through legislation now—this is another thing they did—government created their own accounting assets. This is the first time in Canadian history. They simply legislated the loss at IESO. So you've got a loss—it's like your mortgage on your house. They legislated a loss as a regulatory asset. That is somehow like having a mortgage on your house, which you owe—that's your debt—but calling it an asset. That's what they did. They simply legislated that loss as a regulatory asset.

In essence, if the government or any government is allowed to call a loss an asset, we will never, ever, ever see a deficit in Canada again. Why would you have a deficit? It's an asset. Snap your fingers like these guys did and call the debt an asset and record it on your books. But they got caught by the Auditor General, so it's time for them to come clean.

In the speech that the finance minister gave, he talked about this 4.5% to 3.5% reduction in the small business tax rate. However, all that was in his speech and in the media scrum and what was in the media was this 4.5% to 3.5% reduction. But as you look through the bill, the big binder that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane talked about having a two-hour technical briefing yesterday on—we had ours a little earlier as well—there's no mention of it in the bill. In this entire bill, Bill 177, there's no mention of this 4.5% to 3.5% reduction. In fact, almost everything that the minister talked about in the speech and in the media scrum was fairy-tale and fluffy and unicorns and rainbows, but none of that is really in the bill, which was disturbing and alarming in itself.

But if you look at the book that they supplied—it's 166 pages long. But if you go right to the end here, Speaker, at page 159—you only have a couple of pages left—that's when they added this small business tax reduction from 4.5% to 3.5%. It's pretty obvious this thing came as a last-minute addition. They realized that they're in a lot of trouble with this book because it's all fairy-tale numbers and they'd better put something in here they can talk about, so you've got page 159 talking about this small business corporate income tax rate. It goes on to page 162, which has a chart, and that's really it.

It's a couple of pages long, so you can tell they added this as a last-minute thought: "Look, we're in trouble over Bill 148 and the minimum wage. We've realized now that we're going to lose 50,000 jobs, if the FAO is right; 90,000 jobs, if TD Bank's estimates are right; 185,000 jobs more or less over two years—a little different time length—if the chamber's right. We better do something." So they concocted this 4.5% to 3.5% tax rate.

Let me tell you why that is so useless to most small businesses. I've been a small business owner—medium-size business, maybe—all my life. It started off, certainly, as a small business when I was in my teens. I've been a lifelong entrepreneur, Speaker, and I can tell you that taking this tax rate of 4.5% and dropping it to 3.5% may

sound like some kind of a Hail Mary pass from the Liberals.

But think about this: I have a restaurant in my riding that has a lot of employees. It's open 24/7. The owners, the husband and wife—it's a mom-and-pop shop—came in. They sat down, opened their books up, put their books in front of me and said, "Look at what this is going to do." We're talking about the minimum wage increase now. "It will add \$152,000 a year in costs." It's the most expensive part of his costs now. He said, "First of all, I have to fire four people. I just have no alternative. We can't raise our prices much more than they are. I'm going to fire four people."

But let's just talk about this for a second. It's still going to cost him money. His profit is not that great. I looked at his books; I know his numbers. So dropping from 4.5% to 3.5% when his profit is now—he'll be lucky to even see a profit anymore—3.5% of zero is considerably less than 4.5% of some kind of profitable number. Zero is zero, Speaker. He isn't going to make any money anymore.

He and his wife don't really know what to do. They feel bad; they've got these great employees. And so this is a Hail Mary pass to try to sound like they're doing something, but none of that is in the bill.

In the first half hour I've talked about why there's nothing in this book that can be trusted. None of the numbers mean anything. They're useless. They're not based on fact. The FAO and the Auditor General will not sign off on these, so we know these are useless. There's no sense even talking about the numbers that are in here any longer.

In the second half hour that I have then, Speaker, let's talk about the bill—Bill 177—and what's in it. Sadly, and as you heard from others, there are 46 schedules in this bill—46 schedules. This is an omnibus bill. It's comprised of 46 schedules, and it contains a number of bill consolidations.

We're going to start right at schedule 1. I'm going to go through them all, Speaker. I'll try to go through some of them quickly and some a little slower.

I'm just going to ask the page—if you will come forward for a moment. I don't know if anybody has given you the courtesy yet of seeing a news release that I'm issuing, that we can talk about in a moment, but I wanted you to see that so there are no surprises. I understand your party is aware of it, but I wasn't sure if you were.

Schedule 1 is the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014. I'm not really sure where that fits into the fall economic statement, but I can tell you what I call this bill. The member from Welland will get a chuckle out of this. I call this part of it the "St. Joseph's Health Centre act," because you will remember back when we spoke about the fact that the CEO of St. Joseph's Health Centre was earning a salary of \$720,000 and serves on several boards—for one of which he earned \$357,000 a year and received \$1.5 million in stock.

If you look at that, it's magical now that schedule 1 allows a minister—it doesn't necessarily say "Minister of

Health," so this is going to be for all of them—"to make a particular specified decision" related to executive compensation "that, in the opinion of the minister, is appropriate" for broader public sector executive compensation "on a case-by-case basis." That's the long way around saying that the Minister of Health will now be able to step in and control the salaries of the CEOs of hospitals. That's what this is all about. This was because they were so shocked somebody was earning \$720,000 on one hand from the government, and \$357,000—and 31 days of their time, by the way—on the other hand for sitting on one board. There were many other boards where we didn't count the days. I'll lovingly call this the St. Joseph's Health Centre act.

1720

That's in schedule 1. Schedule 2 and several other schedules—it's called the Building Code Act. Really, it is the Elliot Lake act. And that's what it is. I don't say that in a bad way. This is quite seriously to implement the recommendations of the Algoma mall catastrophe and disaster and the lives that were lost. This is a building code. Here it is in the fall economic statement. Please tell me, somehow, what that has to do with the fall economic statement. Yes, this should be in. Yes, it needs to be passed. Of course you'd support that. These are the recommendations to stop further disasters from happening.

Schedule 3 is the Child Care and Early Years Act, which allows that a childcare provider's own children who are under 6 years old are not required to be counted in certain situations. Well, of course we're going to be in favour of that. It was our idea. We're thrilled that it's in there, Speaker.

Schedule 4, when you look at this one, that is the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. What it's doing in a fall economic statement, we're not sure. It's simply to correct a reference error. That's all it is.

Schedule 5 is the City of Ottawa Act that recognizes Ottawa's bilingual character. I'm not sure what it's doing in the fall economic statement, Speaker, but it's there. And you'll see more about that coming up in a moment.

Schedule 6 is the City of Toronto Act. Well, this gives the minister more authority and this makes other numbers retroactive.

Schedule 7 is the Commodity Futures Act. Okay, that sounds a little bit more finance-y. I can tell you that I called it the whistleblower act. It gives a procedure for an employee to complain to an arbitrator or to the court if the employee has been subject to a reprisal prohibited by that section. I can almost understand that one.

Schedule 8 is the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act. That's more finance-y. It's technical amendments; that's what it is.

Schedule 9 is the Co-operative Corporations Act—technical changes.

Schedule 10 is the Corporations Act. This has to do with mutual insurance corporations and it changes from two alternate chairs down to one, but it is a finance-related issue.

Schedule 12 is the Education Act. This is all about taking the existing provincial and demonstration schools, known as Centre Jules-Léger, and giving them a new not-for-profit called Centre Jules-Léger Consortium. So that's an education act in the middle of your fall economic statement with all these numbers that are made up.

Schedule 13 is your Election Finances Act. I have to tell you, Speaker, this one's my favourite. In this entire document, this one takes the cake. So you remember the campaign finance scandal, Speaker, when Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals got caught in a cash-for-access scandal and campaign finance scandal and all this quid pro quo. You can pay \$100,000 and have six ministers, and then they get caught, and it was you can pay \$100,000 and have six chiefs of staff come to a meeting. I mean, it was—

Hon. Reza Moridi: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, the comment by the member has no relevance to the subject matter of this discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, in my humble opinion, anything to do with the financial minister's statements in reference to the budget would be relevant, and I disagree with that point of order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So it's obvious—and with deep respect, Minister—you have not read the fall economic statement. You have certainly not read the schedules, because this specifically establishes monetary limits for nomination contests. This is the campaign finance—this is exactly what this is. That's why I share your comments: because I'm befuddled on why it's in this bill as well, as you are. I can imagine you would think that this is inappropriate to be in there. I fully understand why the minister said that, because who the heck would ever think that their campaign scandal would be tied into their fall economic statement.

I'll tell you why that's so bizarre, Speaker. Not only did they rush the campaign finance scandal bill to change all these rules and regulations, and now, as the member from Welland said, we can't even go to a spaghetti dinner anymore—well, not only did they do that; in their zeal to get this run through so fast, they made a boatload of mistakes. So here we are, only a few weeks ago debating a very historic bill to create two brand new ridings in northern Ontario, and what was attached to that? Campaign finance reform. It was, "Oops." They had bungled that original bill so badly that they had to jam, into a beautiful bill to create two northern ridings, they had to throw in a rider on that one to try to fix up some campaign—and I'll be honest, I call that one the "Caroline Mulroney clause," because our party is attracting the highest-calibre candidates across Ontario. They're lining up to run for the PC Party. They want to join the Patrick Brown team, and this party did not want Caroline Mulroney to be out there, raising money, so they brought out the changes. They brought out the changes to campaign

finance last time and changed the rule only to benefit themselves.

So here we are again, in the fall economic statement, and we have yet another schedule, schedule 13, the Elections Finances Act, which puts limits and makes it retroactive. The re-enactment of the section is deemed to have come into force last July 1, 2017. I haven't quite figured out the changes in this, who it's going to affect, but the fact that they've gone back and made it retroactive to July 1—as my dear old dad would say, we're not sure who's going to get nailed with this one, but it will manifest itself in the fullest of time. We'll learn who this is going to harm. We'll learn that soon.

Yes, Minister, like you, I would wonder how I could be talking about a campaign finance scandal in the middle of this. Well, it's you guys who put it in there. That's why.

Schedule 14: The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane spoke very passionately about that. This is the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017. This is the Grassy Narrows issue, of course. This one defies all credibility that the Liberals and the Premier did not know about this. This is what they stand up and say every day. They've been in power for 14 years. For 10 years people have been talking about this: "Oh, we didn't know about that." So it's important that this get dealt with. Don't get us wrong, Speaker; we fully support schedule 14. But we're not going to support the fall economic statement or any of the numbers in it because they're made up.

With that in mind, I'm going to break for a moment, Speaker, and just read a letter that I issued today. The letter says:

"The Ontario PC caucus is extremely disappointed with this government's decision to introduce yet another omnibus bill—Bill 177—in a bid to ram through unrelated legislation without proper debate and consideration in the Legislature in order to score cheap political points against their components."

"This is the same cynical approach the government has taken with Bill 174," just this week and last week, "dealing with cannabis sales, where unrelated legislation affecting e-cigarettes and school bus cameras"—school bus cameras—"was inexplicably attached to the cannabis-specific schedules of the bill."

"Let me be clear—many of the schedules contained in Bill 177 have the full support of our caucus. For example, we are completely in favour schedule 43, which would establish a French-language university in Ontario, something our leader, Patrick Brown, led the charge on. We also support the recommendation in schedules 2, 30 and 34 that stemmed from the inquiry into the Elliot Lake mall collapse that will improve safety in Ontario. As a matter of fact, schedule 3, which deals with exceptions for child care providers, is based on an amendment the Ontario PC caucus proposed at committee."

1730

"Bill 177 is a 168-page, 46-schedule omnibus bill introduced by the finance minister, which ironically

enough has very little to do with the fall economic statement.

"The Premier would do well to follow the lead of her federal counterparts, who changed parliamentary standing orders to prevent the use of omnibus bills that include a wide range of unrelated matters. In fact, earlier this month, the Liberal Speaker of the House of Commons ruled that four aspects of the federal budget bill, Bill C-63, were not part of the budget and needed to be introduced as separate bills." They would be wise to follow the lead set by their federal cousins.

"The Ontario PC caucus is requesting that the aforementioned schedules of Bill 177, as well as other non-fall economic statement schedules, be removed and introduced in the Legislature as separate pieces of legislation. They deserve to be considered on their own merit. We will further push for amendments, where necessary, to the finance-specific schedules of the bill to try to improve this legislation.

"We cannot support the financial direction of a government who has allowed debt to spiral out of control beyond \$300 billion."

Speaker, on that point, I would seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to split Bill 177. I have tabled this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nipissing is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That's disappointing.

So I will continue to talk about schedule 14, Grassy Narrows: As I mentioned, I'm very supportive of that. This government should have been taking care of that earlier. Schedule 15 is the Family Law Act. In that particular bill, this is an amendment that would permit a person over 18 to be able to obtain child support from a parent in circumstances where the person is unable to withdraw from parental control. I can go on and on. Speaker, again, it's in the middle of the fall economic statement. These are all important bills, but unrelated to the finances.

Schedule 16 is the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario Act—we call it FSRA. These are amendments, and this is truly an important component of a fall economic statement. Schedule 17 is the Financial Services Tribunal Act. This continues with some consequential amendments, but important.

Schedule 18—also one of my favourites in here—is called the Green Energy Act, 2009. Again, it's in the fall economic statement. This, Speaker, erodes the OEB independence. There's no more charade going on that these bodies are independent. The Liberal Party co-opted all of these energy organizations into improving their so-called fair hydro plan and that scheme to pay for it. They're all co-opted into doing that. They're all under the thumb of the Premier and the Liberal Party: "You do this or else." They live in a culture of fear. That's what this government has created, Speaker: a culture of fear.

Here we have amendments to the Green Energy Act, and that brings us to the very story that's been in the national media about the harm of this Green Energy Act, which is in here. So to the ministers, again, I'm going to talk about green energy because you put it in the fall economic statement. I'm allowed to do that, and I expect to.

Just yesterday—actually, yesterday it was brought out, but it's in today's media. The headline is, "Ontarians Subsidizing Michigan, New York Hydro..." That is something we've talked about here—I was elected in 2011, and the then-Auditor General, in November 2011, held a news conference with a special report on the state of hydro. It's so shocking a report, but so revealing. Everything—everything—that the Auditor General told us, first of all, is now proven to have been true, but all the forecasting that he did—for the next six years he had numbers, and I'm talking numbers in the billions. He was bang-on on every one of his numbers. When the Green Energy Act was first put out, he came out only two years later and said, "Hang on a second. This is going to cost Ontario families billions, and here's why." He told us that there was no business plan done; they just rushed into it. It was, "Ready, fire, aim." They jumped into something they knew nothing about—the law of unintended consequences. It didn't occur to them because, for the most part, there were no business people involved in crafting this thing to tell them whether it was a good business deal or not, whether the numbers would work or not, whether it would hurt families, force energy poverty in Ontario and make families choose whether to heat or eat.

He was right back in 2011. I was there in the room. I was there in the media studio the day he discussed this. I was energy critic at the time. He told us how much money we were going to lose every year exporting surplus wind and solar power; he told us that. This is now in the news today. Ontario lost between \$732 million and \$1.25 billion over the past two years selling surplus clean electricity outside the province. That's the sad reality of what this government has created.

Here in their fall economic statement, they open the door to talk about the Green Energy Act, and I know many of us in our speeches over the course of discussing Bill 177 will want to highlight the Green Energy Act, because they've opened the door. They have opened the door to the pain and suffering they have caused Ontario families through their misguided direction on green energy, when Ontario had the cleanest, greenest, most reliable and most affordable energy in water power created more than 100 years ago by Sir Adam Beck. We had it made. When this government took office, we were amongst the lowest energy rates in North America. Today we're amongst the highest. That's what they have done.

Think of all the companies that continue to leave Ontario—and the stories are numerous—all the companies that expand in the States buying cheap power. I talked just yesterday about the greenhouse chap we had met when I was energy critic. He was telling me that he wanted to double the size of his greenhouse operation. I

had no idea of the magnitude of that. I toured it; it was monstrous. I'm thinking, "This is a lot of millions and millions and multi-tens of millions here." I'm trying to do the math in my head. It's a pretty big number, and he's talking about doubling the size down in around the Chatham-Kent-Essex riding. This was back in 2011 and 2012, but he could not get a fair energy price.

I ran into him here at the vegetable growers' lobby day and I said to him, "Peter, did you ever build your greenhouse expansion that you talked about?" He said, "Vic, I want you to know we spent \$100 million building a twin of our operation, except we did it in Ohio." You can imagine: We're paying Ohio every night to take our surplus power, and they eat our lunch, take our businesses away, put them in Ohio. That's where they invested \$100 million to build a new greenhouse. He said, "Do you remember my friend Terry?" I think that was his name. I said, "Yes, I remember him." We also visited his greenhouse. He said, "Well, he built an \$85-million greenhouse facility, but he did his in Pennsylvania." He built his in Pennsylvania, where energy was cheap. Again, we pay Pennsylvania to take our surplus power.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If people want to have a discussion and you don't want to yell across seven chairs, you might want to go outside to talk about it—the member from Trinity-Spadina. Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I know they don't want to hear about this, because these are Ontario families' lives that have been irreparably harmed and changed. I understand that; I can understand they don't want to hear.

Google announced their first-ever Canadian data centre operation. And where is it going? Quebec. Why? Google said they can't afford the energy in Ontario. That's amazing.

1740

Mr. Han Dong: What about Sidewalk?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Take Amazon—I'm not talking about Amazon's new headquarters; I'm talking about Amazon also building its first-ever data centre in Canada. They built it in Quebec as well. Again, their number one reason: The highest energy rates in North America are here in Ontario and they couldn't afford to build here.

When you've got Sergio Marchionne, the CEO and chair of Fiat Chrysler, telling the Premier of Ontario, "You have created the most expensive jurisdiction in North America in which to do business"—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Ugh.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I hear the member from Barrie moaning. I'd moan too if I were the Premier and heard that she has ruined the province of Ontario and created the most expensive jurisdiction. I understand how that can bother them. They should have known when they put the Green Energy Act in their bill that they're going to have to listen to people talk about how the Green Energy Act has ruined the province of Ontario.

They also put high-occupancy toll lanes in the bill. I remember, during the gas plants scandal, when the government had to turn over documents. They told us, Speaker, with 36,000 documents, "You have them all." Thirty MPPs, 12 cabinet ministers all stood here and said, "You have them all." It turned out to be 20,000 more documents that were turned over in two weeks. In those documents, we found their "revenue tools." High-occupancy toll lanes were one of those revenue tools.

It's not enough that they've increased fees. Your vehicle registration and driver's licence fees have increased \$503 million in four years. It's not enough that that money grab has to happen. There's a war on the car from Kathleen Wynne and her party. People are no longer drivers—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, we're rather rambunctious today, aren't we, the members from Barrie and Trinity-Spadina? You don't want the old Speaker to take it up a notch, do you?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, I didn't think so.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you.

People are no longer drivers in Ontario; they are revenue tools. We've learned that now.

From the beginning, the Wynne Liberal plan has been a thinly veiled scheme that was a lot more about digging into our wallets than about easing congestion or emissions. In fact, they've had to pull back on permits. The fact that they had to pull back on permits proves, without a doubt, that this was a half-baked plan from the start; an exercise that, rather than reducing, may actually be building further gridlock and congestion. That genius plan is in there. Instead of easing congestion, they have a pretty good opportunity here to see more.

Schedule 20 is the Indigenous Institutes Act, a very important bill. This provides for the role of a ministry-recognized council. This is about post-secondary indigenous schools. It's a strong issue. What on earth it's doing in a fall economic statement, we'll never know.

Schedule 21 is the Insurance Act. Again, there are consequential complementary amendments.

Schedule 22, interim appropriation: That is a supply bill. That's actually pure finance. Thank you.

Schedule 23 is the Land Transfer Tax Act.

Schedule 24, Liquor Control Act: This is to do with wine content and labelling. It's some technical amendments.

Schedule 25, the Mining Tax Act: This is all about using foreign currency when operating in another country. You can imagine how that should or shouldn't be in here.

Ministry of Revenue Act: This is another finance section.

Schedule 27, mortgage brokers and lenders: Consequential amendments are made there.

Schedule 28 is the Municipal Act.

Schedule 29 is the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation Act.

Schedule 30 is yet another Elliot Lake act. It supports the intent of the recommendations in the report of the Elliot Lake commission of inquiry. It's an important piece.

Schedule 31: They open the door again to the Ontario Energy Board Act. I've already talked about how the Liberals have co-opted the OPG and other partners into this tangled web they have for their so-called fair hydro plan. The Auditor General was very explicit about that.

Schedule 32 is the Ontario Labour Mobility Act. It amends the name to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, formerly training, colleges and universities.

Schedule 33 is the Pension Benefits Act. I can tell you, there's a letter that I'll read a small portion of into the record. It's from the Canadian Federation of Pensioners. They're saying, "These pensioners will be even worse off than they are today, because plan underfunding will be more common and more harmful due to the reduction in the solvency funding target to 85% from 100%. The 85% funding target is not in Bill 177; it will eventually be made explicit in the regulations."

What they're saying is that they're hopeful that their "persistence on the unnecessary harm caused by" this "will ultimately prove persuasive to the government."

They're trying desperately to fight this.

Schedule 34: More on Elliot Lake.

Schedule 35: the Provincial Offences Act. It's important, but it has nothing to do with the fall economic statement.

Schedules 36 and 37 refer to insurance and securities.

Section 38 is the persons with developmental disabilities act. It hasn't been proclaimed and it needs to be.

You can see that what I'm saying, as this goes on and on and on, is that many of the schedules, we support. We support these. In fact, at least one we even proposed. But we cannot support the financial direction of the government with their wrong and misleading accounting.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): A nice finale, but we'll withdraw that last word.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's not easy to stand up for a whole hour and go through such a comprehensive bill, but I do want to focus my comments on the member from Nipissing's initial accounting commentary. It really goes back to the Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk. Quite honestly, I've never seen any government in any other province across this country be so disrespectful and dismissive of the Auditor General, when she actually has come forward and—for instance, the advertising rules. You can see a government advertisement every five minutes in this province.

We were watching TV the other day—seven commercials in the course of an hour, on everything from transit to the new OHIP+. The Auditor General has correctly said about this government that these are clearly

partisan advertisements. But when this government watered down those rules, they left the door open for political advertising.

The only good thing about it is that it makes people angry. I have to put my faith in the people of this province because they don't like it and they see it for what it is: partisan advertisement that the public is actually paying for.

I want to also comment on the energy comments from the member from Nipissing. The energy file: It's hard to actually imagine a file that could be more mismanaged. And it's directly connected to the campaign finances, which is a part of this bill as well.

Going forward, because we don't have that connection with energy advocates being able to buy policy in the province of Ontario, hopefully one day we're going to be able to clear up this fiasco, but it's going to take some serious effort.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre.

1750

Mr. Yvan Baker: I think what people in my community and people in all of our communities look for when they elect officials is leadership. Leadership means a lot of different things, but it means speaking the truth and it also means bringing solutions to the challenges facing the people of Ontario. The PCs are bringing no solutions. They have no ideas. What they do bring to this Legislature, frankly, is often a lot of malarkey.

First of all, let's make something very clear: The member opposite spent a tremendous amount of time trying to convince the people of Ontario that the budget isn't balanced. The budget is balanced. He's questioning the good word and integrity and professionalism of the civil servants who put the numbers together year after year. These people are not political. They're unbiased. They're professional accountants and finance folks who put the budget together. That budget is balanced, Speaker, and as someone who has been in business and who has advised businesses on their finances, I know a balanced budget when I see one, and this budget is balanced. In fact, it's not only going to be balanced this year; it's going to be balanced next year and the year after that.

An expert panel of accountants verified—checked—to make sure that our accounting practices were appropriate, and they validated them to be appropriate. So this is a balanced budget. Let's just speak truth here to the people of Ontario and not create the impression that somehow—let's not keep speaking malarkey, please.

The second piece is that there's something to be said about the PCs—I won't take lessons from the PCs on fiscal management, when you look at the record they had. When the PCs were in office, they increased the debt by 53%. They had record economic growth—eight years of record economic growth. They ran deficits most of these years. They couldn't even balance the budget themselves, and they increased the debt. Now they're coming to us, after we weathered a recession, invested in the economy, invested in services, built this province up and balanced the budget—now all they have to go after is our account-

ing practices? I think that's a compliment to this government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Yvan Baker: —and a criticism—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. When I say “thank you,” you sit down. Did the member hear that? When I say “thank you,” you sit down. I had to do it three times.

Mr. Michael Harris: Each and every time, when it's either the Liberals or the Auditor General, I'll always side with the Auditor General. I think Ontarians do as well. An independent officer of the Legislature—that's who I believe.

I want to congratulate my colleague from Nipissing on his one hour with regard to the fall economic statement. As he mentioned, this is another omnibus bill brought forward by the government to jam-pack a whole variety of different things. He compared it to, of course, Bill 174, the cannabis rollout in the province, which included measures on e-cigarettes and school bus cameras.

I also want to add, as I said the other day, the limited amount of time that MPPs actually have to speak to some of these critical elements facing Ontarians—three MPPs had the opportunity to speak from the PC caucus on Bill 174; I'm not sure how many on Bill 177, but again, we've called for the government to separate out important schedules, important aspects, in that bill and make them separate pieces of legislation.

Of course, as my colleague went through the different schedules, we support schedules 2, 30 and 34, which stem from the inquiry in Elliot Lake, the mall collapse there, to improve safety for Ontarians; schedule 3, which deals with the exceptions for child care providers—that was an amendment that was put forward by the PC caucus in committee.

We've got a 168-page, 46-schedule omnibus finance bill, and we've asked again for them to separate this.

We are facing a nearly \$300-billion debt in the province of Ontario—\$1 billion a month on interest. You know what? It's very rich, frankly, for the government to talk about balancing the books. Again, every day I'm with the auditor, period.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from North Bay for his one-hour lead—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Nipissing.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Nipissing? North Bay-Nipissing?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's Nipissing, but that's okay.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's just Nipissing? Okay.

He highlighted a few issues. I haven't had a briefing yet on this bill, so there were a few issues that came up. I think that I would agree that I would trust the Auditor General every time with her reports about government. The Auditor General is hired to be the watchdog for the people of this province. Her job is not to be partisan.

What she does, she does because she is hired to do that job. For the government to say, “Well, it's just an accounting practice,” as opposed to a way of actually understating the government's position, I don't think is necessarily being stated—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Accurately.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Accurately, yes.

As well, the issue of schedule 45 concerns me because the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act was opened. It was opened for a good reason: to deal with the issue of mental stress in a better way than it has been dealt with in the past. But while they opened that, they didn't deal with the issue of deeming. I've talked about the deeming piece over and over again. That's workers who have partial benefits and who are actually going to see those benefits reduced or gone unless the government does something about it. I don't know why, when they opened this and they put this into the omnibus bill, they didn't address that issue for those workers who are already living in poverty, and when they actually lose those benefits on January 1 when the minimum wage goes up—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's always a true pleasure to rise in the Legislature. When you do get to give one of those one-hour sessions, it almost feels cathartic. It really does let you get a lot off your chest.

I can say that I was disappointed to hear from the member from Etobicoke Centre. He's a good young guy, a bright young guy, and he should know a lot better than to call the Auditor General's comments “malarkey.” Of course, it's just part of the overall disparaging of the Auditor General that started with the former Minister of Energy and has carried on through to the former chief of the Treasury Board as well. I have been in that media conference room over and over, sitting only a few feet away, when these cabinet ministers disparage the Auditor General. It's a grand plan of theirs so that when they do come out at election time and hold up their budget and say, “See? We told you it was balanced,” they will have disparaged the Auditor General so many times. They're trying to diminish the respect that we all have for her.

It's not working. You got caught. I think everybody on that side of the House owes our auditor and the Financial Accountability Office an apology. Certainly, trying to put nonsense into this book continues to perpetuate this myth that they're balanced. I am very, very disappointed to see that.

Again, we have asked that the unrelated schedules be separated out of this fall economic statement so they can be dealt with properly.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Samia–Lambton | |
| Baker, Yvan (LIB) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | |
| Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB) | Newmarket–Aurora | Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique |
| Barrett, Toby (PC) | Haldimand–Norfolk | |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest | |
| Bisson, Gilles (NDP) | Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James | |
| Bradley, James J. (LIB) | St. Catharines | Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement |
| Brown, Patrick (PC) | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario |
| Campbell, Sarah (NDP) | Kenora–Rainy River | |
| Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Markham–Unionville | Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International |
| Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB) | Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC) | Scarborough–Rouge River | |
| Clark, Steve (PC) | Leeds–Grenville | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| Coe, Lorne (PC) | Whitby–Oshawa | |
| Colle, Mike (LIB) | Eglinton–Lawrence | |
| Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme |
| Crack, Grant (LIB) | Glengarry–Prescott–Russell | |
| Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB) | Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville | Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées |
| Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB) | Vaughan | Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports |
| Delaney, Bob (LIB) | Mississauga–Streetsville | |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB) | Ottawa–Vanier | |
| Dhillon, Vic (LIB) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Dickson, Joe (LIB) | Ajax–Pickering | |
| DiNovo, Cheri (NDP) | Parkdale–High Park | |
| Dong, Han (LIB) | Trinity–Spadina | |
| Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre | Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance |
| Fedeli, Victor (PC) | Nipissing | |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP) | Kitchener–Waterloo | |
| Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB) | Oakville | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail |
| Forster, Cindy (NDP) | Welland | |
| Fraser, John (LIB) | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|--|
| French, Jennifer K. (NDP) | Oshawa | |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP) | Niagara Falls | |
| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Oxford | |
| Harris, Michael (PC) | Kitchener–Conestoga | |
| Hatfield, Percy (NDP) | Windsor–Tecumseh | |
| Hillier, Randy (PC) | Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington | |
| Hoggarth, Ann (LIB) | Barrie | |
| Horwath, Andrea (NDP) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) | St. Paul's | Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée |
| Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB) | Scarborough–Guildwood | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation |
| Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB) | Oak Ridges–Markham | Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Jones, Sylvia (PC) | Dufferin–Caledon | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Kiwala, Sophie (LIB) | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles | |
| Kwinter, Monte (LIB) | York Centre / York-Centre | |
| Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB) | Ottawa–Orléans | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels |
| Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB) | Peterborough | Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises |
| Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB) | Brant | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative |
| MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB) | Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est | Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité |
| MacLaren, Jack (IND) | Carleton–Mississippi Mills | |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC) | Nepean–Carleton | |
| Malhi, Harinder (LIB) | Brampton–Springdale | |
| Mangat, Amrit (LIB) | Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud | |
| Mantha, Michael (NDP) | Algoma–Manitoulin | |
| Martins, Cristina (LIB) | Davenport | |
| Martow, Gila (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) | London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord | Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales |
| Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Atikokan | |
| McDonnell, Jim (PC) | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry | |
| McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB) | Cambridge | Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts |
| McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB) | Burlington | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport |
| McMeekin, Ted (LIB) | Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale | |
| McNaughton, Monte (PC) | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex | |
| Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB) | Etobicoke–Lakeshore | Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|---|--|
| Miller, Norm (PC) | Parry Sound–Muskoka | |
| Miller, Paul (NDP) | Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB) | Richmond Hill | Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences |
| Munro, Julia (PC) | York–Simcoe | |
| Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB) | Halton | Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants |
| Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB) | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre | Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) | Essex | |
| Nicholls, Rick (PC) | Chatham-Kent–Essex | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook | |
| Pettapiece, Randy (PC) | Perth–Wellington | |
| Potts, Arthur (LIB) | Beaches–East York | |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord | |
| Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) | Northumberland–Quinte West | |
| Romano, Ross (PC) | Sault Ste. Marie | |
| Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) | Guelph | President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP) | London West / London-Ouest | |
| Scott, Laurie (PC) | Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock | |
| Sergio, Mario (LIB) | York West / York-Ouest | |
| Smith, Todd (PC) | Prince Edward–Hastings | |
| Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) | Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP) | Toronto–Danforth | |
| Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) | Mississauga–Erindale | |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP) | Hamilton Mountain | |
| Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB) | Sudbury | Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie |
| Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) | Huron–Bruce | |
| Vanthof, John (NDP) | Timiskaming–Cochrane | |
| Vernile, Daiene (LIB) | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre | |
| Walker, Bill (PC) | Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound | |
| Wilson, Jim (PC) | Simcoe–Grey | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |
| Wong, Soo (LIB) | Scarborough–Agincourt | Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente |
| Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario |
| Yakabuski, John (PC) | Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke | |
| Yurek, Jeff (PC) | Elgin–Middlesex–London | |
| Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Willowdale | Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation |
| Vacant | Bramalea–Gore–Malton | |
| Vacant | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre | |

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Grant Crack, John Fraser
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Lorne Coe, Bob Delaney
Vic Dhillon, Joe Dickson
Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley